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New York

President:	Mrs. Adnin	(Malaysia)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Olguín Cigarroa
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mr. Adamu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2015/422)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2015/422)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, Germany, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Sweden and Turkey to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/422, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

I now give the floor to Mr. Haysom.

Mr. Haysom: I thank you for this opportunity to share the perspectives of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on recent developments in Afghanistan.

Since my most recent briefing to the Security Council (see S/PV.7403), there has been progress in meeting Afghanistan's challenges in three distinct but interrelated areas: the economic, security and political areas. Although such progress itself has been modest, this should not be undervalued.

It needs to be stressed that Afghanistan continues to be tested in meeting its benchmarks in all three areas. There is no room for complacency. Failure in any one of these areas would have consequences for the overall success of the Afghan transition. It is absolutely clear that Afghanistan continues to need the support of the international community and the sustained attention of the Council.

The economic contraction that followed the withdrawal of international military forces presents a continuing challenge to the Government to meet the fiscal gap — that is, the gap between the resources it can muster and the monies it must spend. Afghanistan is meeting and exceeding admittedly modest revenue targets. Nevertheless, Afghanistan is struggling to harness the resources to meet its governance commitments and its development priorities. At this time of continued low economic growth, we must also guard against the danger of an increasing shift into the illicit economy, particularly so in the case of burgeoning narcotics production.

Afghanistan is meeting its security challenges, but is nonetheless being increasingly tested. The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have been undeniably stretched as they take on full security responsibilities. We have seen an intensification of conflict across the country, including in areas previously considered to be safe. Only yesterday, there were fresh challenges to Government security control in an area close to the strategically important Kunduz City. Today, there was a failed attack on Parliament as it was about to review the nomination for Minister of Defence. While the ANSF face operational challenges, their commitment is beyond question, and they are demonstrating continued resilience in the face of insurgent efforts to take and hold ground.

Foreign fighters from Afghanistan's northern neighbours and elsewhere present a particular challenge. There also remains considerable concern that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, referred to in Afghanistan as "Daesh", is seeking to establish a foothold. Addressing that shared threat demands greater regional involvement and collaboration. It seems inequitable that Afghanistan should be shouldering the burden of taking on terrorists whose points of origin and eventual destinations are its neighbours.

The determined outreach from Afghanistan to its neighbours is encouraging. Stronger relations between the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan are particularly noteworthy, with growing recognition of shared interests. Ultimately, deeper collaboration on the full range of political, economic and social issues will promote regional stability and prosperity.

The intensification of the conflict was predicted. There has been higher attrition on both sides, but the most tragic index of this intensification is the toll on civilians — so far this year 4,216 civilians have been killed or injured. Just two days ago, 16 civilians, mostly women and children, were killed when a bus hit an improvised explosive device. Sadly it was not an isolated incident, but rather a typical event.

Such incidents take a terrible emotional, economic and social toll on families, especially surviving widows, often left in the most appalling economic circumstances. Many other Afghans continue to be affected by the conflict, including those who have been displaced. Humanitarian assistance is often impeded by the continued insecurity and, lamentably, humanitarian actors have been targeted.

The United Nations will continue to provide humanitarian support to those affected, and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) will work to increase levels of trauma care and meet the short-term needs of the increasing number of those internally displaced. UNAMA will also continue to advocate with all parties, including the Taliban, to strengthen measures to ensure the protection of civilians.

On the political front, there has also been modest progress. Since I last briefed the Council in March (see S/PV.7403), all the members of the Cabinet have been appointed, even though one remains to be confirmed. As of this morning, 21 provincial governors have been appointed, and there has been agreement on other significant appointments.

After long delays, the Government has committed to appointing the electoral reform commission within a week and to providing clarity on the electoral calendar within a month. The term of office of the lower house of the National Assembly, the Wolesi Jirga, was due to end today, without the election for the new members having taken place. The lack of clarity on the future of the current Wolesi Jirga had caused consternation, with the potential for public discord. Fortunately, just three days ago, President Ghani decreed an extension of the Wolesi Jirga until elections can be held.

Despite political tensions, Afghan institutions were able to work together to find solutions on sovereign issues. The United Nations looks forward to a decision on the date of the next elections, as well as action to implement the commitment to electoral reform. Those steps will go a long way towards reassuring Afghans that the democratic institutions and processes are able to fulfil their proper roles and to meet public expectations.

The most difficult aspect of the national unity Government partnership has been to effect appointments. With those now largely now completed and the Cabinet in place, we expect to see a more effective functioning of the Government. Now is the time for a surge in the delivery of public services, the fulfilment of election promises and the implementation of the reforms set out in London and promised in the ministerial 100-day action plans. The upcoming senior officials meeting of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, coming in less than three months' time, presents an opportunity to demonstrate real progress on the mutual commitments of donors and Government to supporting the Government's reforms.

In reference to the request by the Security Council that the Secretary-General initiate an examination of the role, structure and activities of all United Nations entities in Afghanistan, I am pleased to say that we have now agreed with the Government to establish a commission, composed of representatives of the Government, the international donor community, UNAMA and affiliated agencies, funds and programmes, co-chaired by UNAMA and the Government. The terms of reference have been shared with the members of the commission, which will commence its work shortly. We anticipate having a report ready for the Council by the time of its September meeting on Afghanistan.

Peace would have a major positive impact on the capacity of the Government to address its economic, security and political challenges. In the long term, peace is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Unless Afghans can find a way to live together in harmony, Afghanistan's political and security institutions and its economy simply may not be sustainable. Failure would have no beneficiaries.

Despite the disturbing security trends, or perhaps even as a consequence of them, there has been a renewed interest in peace efforts to resolve the conflict. Last March, I spoke of a unique alignment of circumstances that could be conducive to fostering peace talks. Indeed, the essential ingredients for a peace process are present: a protracted violent conflict with little prospect of a military victory for either side combined with clear signs of a growing interest in a peace process.

A conference hosted by the Government of Qatar in early May reaffirmed the appetite for peace felt by a wide range of Afghans, showing the potential for progress to that end through dialogue. Since then, there have been several similar meetings in various locations, most recently in Oslo last week, which I attended. Those events have confirmed that Afghans want an end to the ever-present violence that does so much harm and shows no signs of abating.

While the Government has repeatedly stated its readiness to engage in direct talks with the Taliban, what is still missing is a clear indication from the Taliban that they are ready to engage directly with the Government. Without that direct engagement, no meaningful progress towards peace will be possible, a point that I continue to stress in my conversations with Taliban representatives. Conference pronouncements have been useful in clarifying positions, but can never provide a format for a systematic engagement between empowered representatives on the conditions for, the agenda of and the barriers to an enduring peace. In short, a direct engagement is necessary for a negotiated agreement.

With leadership, peace is within reach. However, the intensification of the conflict is eroding the atmosphere for constructive negotiations. Just as the voices for peace are growing louder, so too are those who believe that peace is neither possible nor desirable or that the focus should be on war. It is thus critical that the international community as a whole, and the regional neighbours in particular, send the same message to all involved, unambiguously and forcefully. The time to begin direct peace and reconciliation talks is now.

UNAMA supports a direct engagement between the armed groups and the Government, has attempted to facilitate its realization and will continue to do so in full consultation with the Government.

I would finally like to express my hope that, in the holy month of Ramadan, Afghans will be able to come together to worship in peace.

The President: I thank Mr. Haysom for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan): I would like to thank Malaysia for its leadership of the Council this month and for organizing this important debate. I would also like to thank Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), for his statement and the Secretary-General for his recent report (S/2015/422) on the situation in Afghanistan.

As we gather today to discuss the situation in Afghanistan, the country has reached a critical moment in its history. The armed enemies of the country have embarked on a new offensive against the Afghan Government and its people, subsequent to the end of the International Security Assistance Force's combat mission and the transfer of full security responsibility to the Afghan national defence and security forces. Just today, the enemies of Afghanistan conducted a heinous attack against the Afghan Parliament in Kabul, wounding dozens of civilians, including children. We strongly condemn that deliberate attack against democracy and the representatives of the people.

This new wave of fighting is compounded by an unprecedented convergence of extremist and international terrorist networks on our soil — they consist of the Taliban, thousands of foreign terrorist fighters and violent extremist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Those groups not only target Afghan forces and civilians with suicide bombings, set improvised explosive devices, take hostages and carry out assassinations, but they also seek to take control of districts and even provinces to use them as bases for their agenda in Afghanistan, as well as in the wider region in South and Central Asia. Afghan security forces have responded to those tremendous challenges with bravery, strength, and determination. In the past months, they have thwarted numerous attempts to control territory, eliminated thousands of enemy fighters and foiled plots designed to kill, shock and terrorize the people of Afghanistan. For the first time, Afghan forces have moved from a defensive to an offensive posture and have shown more capability, potential and resilience than ever before. They have proved their capacity to protect the security and safety of the Afghan people and to prevent the enemies of Afghanistan from sending the country down a spiral of chaos and disorder.

Security is a pressing national priority and is an essential item on the agenda of His Excellency President Ashraf Ghani as Commander in Chief. Our efforts to defend the country serve not only the interests of the Afghan people; we are also fighting on behalf of every one of our neighbours to uphold the safety and security of our greater region. As the national unity Government pursues that agenda, we are grateful for the continued support of our international partners and their commitment to train, advise and assist the Afghan forces. In the face of the great challenges before us, continued support to the Afghan forces, including air support and other necessary assistance, will remain essential.

While our counter-terrorism and military efforts are fundamental to the security of the country, it is clear that lasting peace requires a political solution. To that end, the national unity Government has prioritized the reinvigoration of the peace process. Recent engagements between representatives of the High Peace Council, Afghan civil society — including women — and the Taliban have promoted dialogue and mutual understanding and generated momentum towards an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-managed peace process. The role of our neighbours is crucial to our efforts to secure peace. In that regard, the Government of Afghanistan has taken bold steps to open a new page in our relations with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Over the past 14 years, an undeclared state of war between our two countries has impacted our national security and the security of the wider region. A new dialogue between our two brotherly nations will allow us to move past that history and work together for peace and stability. We highlight the recent visit of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to Kabul as a positive step and expect that Pakistan's commitment to peace and stability extends to ending sanctuaries and compelling the Taliban to stop their violent campaigns.

Following last year's historic elections, the national unity Government is dedicated to advancing its agenda for political, economic and social reform. President Ghani has appointed all of the ministers and continues to appoint governors and other senior leadership officials within the Government. Every ministry has embarked upon a public 100-day action plan designed to achieve the national objectives identified by the Government's Realizing Self-Reliance agenda. The principles of merit, transparency and accountability lie at the centre of all new appointments and the Government's work. From tackling the Kabul Bank case as one of the Administration's first acts to establishing a national procurement board — chaired by the President himself — to reviewing every single government contract, the national unity Government is committed to combating corruption, ending impunity and strengthening the rule of law. A culture of accountability has emerged across the country as a result of our commitment to ensure the establishment of a clean, functioning and effective Government.

The Government's dedication to accountability encompasses a greater focus on the transparent and effective use of international aid and assistance. Afghanistan is tremendously grateful for the contributions of our international partners, which have allowed us to rebuild our country. At the same time, it is clear that development cooperation should evolve so that aid can play a facilitating and enabling role countrywide. We look forward to in-depth discussions on aid efficiency at the upcoming Senior Officials Meeting of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. The Government has also requested presentations from major donors, international financial institutions and the United Nations on their development portfolios, and it is actively engaged in the upcoming examination of the role, structure and activities of all United Nations entities in Afghanistan, as mandated by the Council.

The agenda for reform and transformation is guided by a strong commitment to advance the rights of all Afghan people — particularly the rights of women. There are now 4 female Cabinet ministers and one female governor, and President Ghani has pledged to appoint more women to senior Government positions, including ambassadorial posts. Last week, President Ghani introduced Afghanistan's first female Supreme Court nominee. That sets an important precedent and shows that the Government's commitment to increasing women's participation is not merely symbolic, but part of a systematic policy aimed at including women at the highest levels of decision-making. The national unity Government is working closely with our international partners to protect and promote the rights of all Afghan citizens. Last week, the Afghanistan-European Union Human Rights Dialogue was launched in Kabul to provide a forum in which to discuss, coordinate and synergize a full range of human-rights issues. The national unity Government is also focused on fulfilling its commitment to carry out comprehensive electoral reforms. To that end, in March the Government established a Special Commission on Electoral Reform, which includes representatives of civil society and the United Nations, and this month the Government announced plans to finalize the election calendar in one month's time.

Afghanistan continues to strengthen cooperation with all our neighbours and countries in the region as part of a broader framework for regional cooperation. In the last three months, President Ghani has engaged the leadership of Iran, India, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, and Afghan senior officials have participated in key regional meetings — including the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process meeting on 25 May. Afghanistan has also signed the draft Afghanistan-Pakistan-Tajikistan Trilateral Transit Trade Agreement, and the final pending documents for the Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project, which will strengthen Afghanistan's potential to become the capital of the continental economy, a hub in the Heart of Asia.

We look forward to the Sixth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan in September, which will be an important step towards ensuring further cooperation and better connections in the region.

Our international partnerships remain vital to Afghanistan's long-term development and prosperity. The historic visit to the United States of the Afghan high-level delegation led by President Ghani in March reaffirmed our commitment to the United States-Afghan strategic partnership. During the visit, President Ghani addressed the American people and the Congress and held enormously productive discussions with President Obama and the leadership of the United States. Together they announced a new development partnership, which will mobilize up to $800 million in economic assistance for Afghan development and reform priorities. President Ghani concluded his visit in New York, where he underlined the importance of the United Nations-Afghan partnership at meetings with the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and the leadership of the United Nations.

At a time when new conflicts and wars plague the world and divert our attention and resources, the continuing cooperation and support of the international community is crucial to Afghanistan's future. While Afghanistan faces great challenges, the country is steadily realizing the goals of the transformation decade and moving towards a brighter future. As we do so, we know that our ongoing partnerships and the support of the international community will be essential to the peace and stability of Afghanistan, the region and the world.

The President: I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Secretary-General's Special Representative and Ambassador Tanin for their outstanding presentations. I would like to begin my statement today by condemning this morning's deplorable attack in Kabul against the parliament of Afghanistan. My condemnation is twofold: first, because it was an attack on innocent people; and, secondly, because it was an attack on all of Afghan society and on all of the country's parliamentary groups, which, I would recall, were democratically elected. It took place at a particularly important moment, because those groups were deciding on the appointment of the new Minister of Defence and agreeing on the extension of the parliament's legislative functions. The Security Council and the members of the international community must therefore be more united than ever in their condemnation. As the Security Council's penholder on Afghanistan, Spain is circulating a draft press release that we trust will be adopted today.

My statement will focus on five main areas related to Afghanistan: first, recent developments, the Government and the elections; secondly, security matters; thirdly, questions related to reconciliation; fourthly, the situation in the region and its new involvement in the country; and, fifthly, the Tripartite Commission. Before I move on, I should say that Spain aligns itself with the statement to be made later by the representative of the European Union.

In the three months since the Security Council last met on this issue (see S/PV.7403), there has been continued progress of the Afghan Government, which I welcome, on the road of reform and the consolidation of the gains already made, in accordance with the will of the Afghan people, expressed through the ballot box. It is essential to continue on that road. I would like to reiterate once again Spain's support for President Ghani and the national unity Government. We also welcome the fact that the process of forming the Government and appointing the remaining high-level positions is nearing completion, and I listened with particular interest to Ambassador Tanin's words regarding the participation of women in that process. We also welcome the impetus given to the practical implementation of the Government's work through tools such as the 100-day action plans of the various ministries.

Much remains to be done, however, and the challenges ahead are considerable. The implementation of the reforms, in particular the electoral reform, which remains pending, must be accelerated. The postponed parliamentary elections must be held and, above all, the gains of recent years must be preserved. In this new phase, as in previous phases, Afghanistan can count on the support of Spain and the international community as a whole.

With regard to security, we are concerned by the increase in insurgent violence and terrorist acts, whose perpetrators clearly hold Afghanistan and Afghans in contempt. We deplore the increase in the number of civilian victims of the conflict, which is reflected in the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/422), and we are concerned by the persistent reports of the presence of foreign terrorist fighters. We must not be daunted, however, just as the members of the Afghan security forces and bodies, who are paying a high price for valiantly and resolutely performing their mission, are not daunted. Spain reiterates its commitment to supporting those forces and bodies through the Resolute Support Mission, which provides security training, advisers and assistance.

With regard to the reconciliation process, progress must be made as quickly as possible towards national peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan, and I would emphasize that we must involve the Taliban more. The process must be Afghan-led, as Ambassador Tanin rightly said, or it will quite simply not succeed. It must also, however, preserve the gains made over the last 14 years, particularly in the area of human rights and, above all, women's and girls' rights. We therefore welcome the guarantees provided in that regard on many occasions by President Ghani and the high priority that his Government will give to the respect and promotion of human rights in Afghanistan.

I will now move on to the role of the region, about which Ambassador Tanin spoke in detail. We also welcome the newfound dynamism of Afghanistan and its neighbours, which have recently given a new dimension to regional affairs. As a supporting country of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process, Spain is utterly convinced of the importance of that new dimension for the stability of the progress made in Afghanistan. We particularly welcome the substantive steps taken by Afghanistan and Pakistan to enhance their cooperation in the face of their common challenges and shared threats.

Lastly, I would like to mention the Tripartite Commission, which comprises representatives of the Government of Afghanistan, the international donor community, and UNAMA and United Nations agencies. The Commission is to examine the role, structure and activities of all United Nations entities in Afghanistan, as requested of the Secretary-General by the Security Council in its resolution 2210 (2015) and in response to the interest in the matter expressed by Afghanistan. In its capacity as penholder, Spain would encourage the Government of Afghanistan to exercise its irreplaceable leadership in that process, without which the expected result will not be achieved within the desired time frame.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Madam President, I wish to thank you for convening this debate on Afghanistan.

I would also like to thank Mr. Haysom, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, for his briefing, and Ambassador Tanin, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, for his statement.

Afghanistan is faced with the arduous task of restoring national stability and achieving comprehensive social and economic development. This year, 2015, marks the beginning of its Transformation Decade. Thanks to the joint efforts of the Afghan Government and people, significant progress has been made in maintaining stability and promoting development, and the Transformation Decade is off to a good start. The comprehensive creation of a united, stable, developed and friendly Afghanistan and the achievement of the ultimate objective, which is to see the Afghan people governing Afghanistan, require not only the sustained and unremitting effort of the entire country but also the continued support and assistance of the international community, while ensuring that Afghanistan's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity are respected. In that regard, I would like to make the following comments.

First, China welcomes the recently formed Afghan National Unity Government and the creation of the Special Commission on Election Reform, which should be able to actively advance the process of electoral reform. We hope that the parties in Afghanistan will be able to help the Commission make progress through dialogue and consultation and ensure that the National Unity Government can implement its mandate and honour its obligations, so that parliamentary and local elections can be held successfully, something that is crucial to promoting the Transformation Decade in Afghanistan.

Secondly, we support a national reconciliation process led and owned by the Afghan people, which is essential if comprehensive national peace and stability are to be achieved. We commend the Afghan Government's serious efforts to advance national reconciliation, and we hope that all actions taken in Afghanistan will bear in mind the country's need for peace and stability and the interests of its people though the promotion of positive progress in the national reconciliation process. China welcomes the ongoing assistance being provided by countries in the region, and we hope that the international community will support and coordinate with the Afghan Government and people's efforts with a view to creating an external environment conducive to the country's national reconciliation process.

Thirdly, the situation in Afghanistan is still challenging. Security incidents are quite frequent and have led to massive civilian casualties. China supports the Afghan Government's efforts to improve the domestic security situation, and we hope that all parties will shoulder their responsibilities in working to help Afghanistan strengthen the capacities of its national security and police forces so that they can respond effectively to the various security threats and challenges facing the country, and in that way create a foundation conducive to economic and social development.

Fourthly, China supports Afghanistan's efforts to advance peace and reconstruction, and we hope to see those efforts supported vigorously by the international community. While respecting the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan, the international community should proactively support the country's new Government as it creates its administrative programme, honour its aid commitments and strengthen Afghanistan's self-reliance in working to achieve social and economic development. We support the efforts of the United Nations and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to address the country's issues. We hope that UNAMA will improve its communication with the Afghan Government so as enhance synergy in the promotion of peace and reconstruction.

Fifthly, we support Afghanistan in its efforts to strengthen neighbourly and friendly relations with other countries in the region and improve its participation in regional cooperation. Such cooperation can help it respond effectively to joint challenges and threats, such as those represented by terrorism and drugs. We would like to congratulate Afghanistan for its participation, for the first time, as an observer at the meetings of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization held in April, and we will work to promote the continuing and constructive role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and other regional entities in the Afghanistan issue. China is looking forward to the fifth foreign ministerial meeting of the Istanbul Process, to be held this year in Pakistan, and believes it will produce positive results.

This year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Afghanistan. It is also a year of friendship and cooperation between the two countries. We will further promote our countries' strategic partnership and work within the framework of the Belt and Road initiative to help the Afghan Government intensify its capacity-building and play a constructive role in achieving peace, stability and development in Afghanistan as soon as possible.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and Ambassador Zahir Tanin, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, for their statements.

Chad is pleased that Afghanistan has seen considerable improvements in the past nine months under the direction of its new authorities and thanks to the determination of its people. Significant progress has been made with political and administrative reforms, despite the fact that major challenges continue in the security and humanitarian areas, in regional cooperation and in combating drug trafficking. Similarly, Chad welcomes the Afghan authorities' efforts in the political arena, which have enabled it to proceed to the nomination of a cabinet for the National Unity Government that includes four women, as well as the appointment of 15 members of the Special Commission on Electoral Reform, thus making concrete their commitment to reforms in that area. We also commend the start of the third phase of Afghan civil society's activities in implementing the national and provincial road maps for peace, with UNAMA's support, and we encourage those groups to continue their efforts. The countries of the subregion and the international community have made huge diplomatic and political efforts to help restore peace and relaunch Afghanistan's development. However, much remains to be done in mobilizing the financial resources needed to support the Afghan authorities' commendable efforts to bring those processes to fruition.

Despite the political progress that has been made, the security situation in Afghanistan is still worrying. The staggering number of incidents recorded by UNAMA between 15 February and 30 April, particularly in the southern, south-eastern and eastern provinces of the country, which accounted for 71 per cent of the 5,033 cases recorded during that period — as well as the two separate attacks on Saturday, 19 June, for which the Taliban has claimed responsibility and in which at least 17 civilians were killed and several more wounded — unfortunately testifies to the seriousness of the situation. Monday morning's car-bomb attack on the Afghan Parliament in Kabul, which killed at least one woman and a child and wounded 15 people in the surrounding streets, is yet more evidence of the deteriorating security situation. We strongly condemn all those attacks and call on those responsible, notably the terrorist groups and armed groups, to immediately halt such horrific criminal acts. We would like to express our condolences to the Government of Afghanistan and to the families of the victims. We wish the wounded a speedy recovery.

The fact that some terrorist groups have pledged their allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and that there are foreign terrorist fighters present on Afghan soil means that the international community must be more vigilant. Furthermore, concerning the fight against drug trafficking, Chad welcomes the latest statistics that indicate a decrease in such traffic and encourages the new Afghan authorities to work harder to eradicate that traffic completely. On that point, we would like to repeat our encouragement to Afghanistan's neighbouring countries and to the international community to intensify and coordinate their efforts in the trans-boundary fight against drug trafficking.

On the deterioration of the humanitarian situation, especially for internally displaced persons as a result of natural disasters and for the victims of anti-personnel landmines, we call upon the international community to show greater solidarity and mobilization to support those victims. In that regard, Chad would like to reiterate its support for the Secretary-General's appeal to increase humanitarian assistance aimed at helping the Afghan people to cope with their food needs and at helping refugees return to their homes.

In conclusion, we support the Afghan authorities in their efforts and call upon the international community to further support the Government. Finally, we would like to pay tribute to all United Nations and humanitarian agency staff members working in Afghanistan under extremely difficult conditions. We encourage them to continue their commitment, working shoulder to shoulder with the Afghan people.

Mr. Adamu (Nigeria): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this very important and timely debate. I would like to thank Mr. Nicholas Haysom for his briefing and Ambassador Tanin for a very perceptive outlook on his country's progress.

Afghanistan continues to make significant progress towards post-conflict recovery. The appointment of all ministers and the formalization of the Office of the Chief Executive and other key offices are notable achievements. Indeed, the development and implementation of 100-day plans for each ministry have certainly given the necessary momentum to the realization of the national objectives. That progress can be given further impetus by the Government with an acceleration of its reform agenda. We welcome President Ghani Ahmadzai's efforts in not only advancing the rights of Afghan women but also empowering them. No less significant is his steadfast commitment to electoral reform, which is essential to the long-term peace and security of the country. The Government's decision to restore the faith of the people in the democratic process is highly commendable. In our view, the establishment of the Commission on Electoral Reform signals an intent to address fundamental issues of governance in consonance with the provisions of the political agreement of 21 September 2014.

In addition to electoral reforms, we believe that transparency, accountability and inclusive governance are other dimensions that must be addressed in order to achieve enduring peace and security in Afghanistan. That must go hand in hand with the promotion of economic growth in order to effectively address the prevailing economic situation. Challenges, such as institutional capacity and structural deficiencies, can be more readily surmounted with the assistance of the international community. That is why we are encouraged by the agreement on the International Monetary Fund programme designed to secure the Government longer-term access to financial support. We know that some progress has been made in developing the private sector. However, more effort is required to promote vibrant entrepreneurial activity. In addition to international assistance, the private sector must also play a part in the economic recovery of Afghanistan. Foreign investment will be vital to stimulating economic growth in the country. The Government should therefore exert more effort towards improving the investment climate in order to attract more foreign capital.

Political and economic activities can thrive only in a peaceful environment. We are therefore encouraged by the recent NATO initiatives to ensure continuous support for the Afghan National Security Forces post-2015. We expect that it will stand the Forces in good stead and gradually build their capacity to successfully respond to security threats. Yesterday's violence and the attack on the Parliament Building today only endanger lives and widen the gap between negotiation, inclusiveness and the use of force. As the Afghan National Security Forces strive to ensure peace throughout the country, we call on anti-Government elements to refrain from attacks that deliberately target civilians, to lay down their weapons and to respond positively to President Ghani Ahmadzai's offer to negotiate an inclusive peace in the higher interests of the country.

Illicit drug production and trafficking in Afghanistan remain a major concern. It is not only a major source of terrorist financing, but its links with criminal activities also undermine the rule of law. Nigeria commends the efforts of the Afghan law-enforcement agencies to eradicate drug crops; those efforts have been strengthened by the improved coordination of efforts among law-enforcement agencies and the improved capability of the police to conduct operations. We are encouraged by the success of the border liaison offices in the seizure of narcotics, but believe that more can be accomplished to strengthen those gains with the support of the international community.

On regional cooperation, we welcome the active engagement of Afghanistan with its neighbours, especially in overcoming counter-terrorism challenges and combating trafficking in drugs, arms and humans and organized crime. We also welcome the activities under the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process. Both developments reaffirm the commitment of regional partners to Afghanistan's stability, economic development, territorial integrity and sovereignty. It is our expectation that the discussions centred on regional cooperation will address both security challenges and the Afghan peace process and will also prioritize regional economic activity as part of collective security. Through that cooperation, the international community has demonstrated its commitment to and support for peace and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan stands at the threshold of transformation. The international community must be eternally vigilant to make certain that the transformation is to peace, security and, indeed, genuine reconciliation and development. In that formidable endeavour, we commend Special Representative Nicholas Haysom for his inspiring leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. The Mission staff's distinctive accomplishments and invaluable contribution to the concerted global efforts to restore democracy, peace and stability in Afghanistan will endure eternally.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Haysom and Ambassador Tanin for their candid and detailed remarks and for their dedicated work to sustain a fruitful partnership between the international community and the Afghan Government. The United States warmly welcomes the progress that both of them have noted in their briefings, which the Secretary-General also highlights in his report (S/2015/422).

We are particularly encouraged by the formation of a Cabinet and by President Ghani Ahmadzai's and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah's commitment to work together to build a better future for the Afghan people. Their leadership will be vital to achieving the ambitious reform goals that the Government has set for itself, especially with regard to electoral reform. We hope that the Afghan Government's recent announcement to extend the parliamentary term will allow the time necessary for the Government to carry out electoral reform. As they work urgently to achieve those goals, they can count on the strong, continued support of the United States.

The progress Afghanistan has continued to make is remarkable when considered in the context of the ongoing armed conflict that is taking such a heavy toll on the Afghan people. It seems clear that the Taliban and other armed groups have been intent on testing the resolve and capabilities of the Afghan national defence and security forces since the beginning of the year when the national forces assumed full responsibility for Afghanistan's security.

The Afghan national defence and security forces have risen to the challenge at great cost, and we honour the sacrifices of the many Afghans who have given their lives for their country and people and those who continue to put their lives on the line. We also reaffirm our commitment to continue to train, advise and assist the Afghan national defence and security forces, including through NATO's Resolute Support Mission. That is a key facet of the enduring United States-Afghanistan strategic partnership.

The costs of the conflict can be seen in all segments of Afghan society. Just this morning, as Special Representative Haysom noted, the Taliban detonated a bomb outside Afghanistan's Parliament. The Taliban's actions today, which the United States condemns in the strongest terms, demonstrate the growing distance between the insurgency and the Afghan people Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families at this time.

The continued deliberate targeting of civilians by the Taliban and other groups is despicable and contrary to international law. Behind the statistics, however, are real lives, real people taken from their families too soon, their full potential unrealized, people like Dr. Jawid Sahai and Mohammad Mohammedy, who were working to improve the health and education of their fellow Afghans until they were killed by insurgents in a savage attack on a Kabul hotel in May — an attack in which a survivor said that the assailants hunted down and executed civilians, repeatedly shooting victims to make sure they were dead.

How many more Afghans might Dr. Sahai and Mr. Mohammady have helped had they not been brutally murdered? How do we account for the devastation felt by the loved ones they left behind? Amid all the bloodshed and heartache of that senseless violence, the Afghan's Government's openness to dialogue is a testament to the statesmanship of its leaders. Unfortunately, the Taliban has not reciprocated, despite the commendable efforts of international actors to facilitate dialogue. We renew our call on the Taliban to end violence, break their ties with international terrorist groups, accept Afghanistan's Constitution and engage in direct talks with the Afghan Government on achieving lasting peace for the Afghan people. All of us — members of the Council, Afghanistan's neighbours and the international community as a whole — have a stake in Afghanistan's future and in helping Afghans confront the challenges I have noted. We can and must work together to support Afghanistan's Government of national unity, its security forces and its economic development. We welcome the efforts of all countries to work to increase and improve their engagement with Afghanistan, and we look forward to the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process ministerial conference in Pakistan in November. That will be an opportunity to strengthen regional cooperation and integration.

Afghanistan's problems and challenges are formidable. They are all too real. They grab headlines, and those headlines can be dispiriting. But there are other stories too — stories about the daily incremental progress that give me great hope for Afghanistan's future. Stories such as that of a 22-year-old woman from Logar province whose first two babies died at full term. The third time she was pregnant, though, she gave birth to a healthy baby girl at Kabul Hospital, thanks to the use of the partograph, a low-cost tool that monitors key issues during labour so that doctors can make better-informed decisions. The increased use of that device is one of the reforms that has improved Afghan health care. Such stories may not sell newspapers or air time, but they capture the resilience and determination of Afghans committed to improving the lives of their countrymen and women despite all the violence. They offer hope for a brighter future for Afghanistan, and they remind us why our support for Afghanistan and its people must never falter.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): I would like to thank Nicholas Haysom, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Ambassador Tanin for their briefings.

We want to begin by commending the Prime Minister and Chief Executive of the Government of Afghanistan for the progress they have made in establishing a new representative Government for Afghanistan. That progress is not as extensive as they would have wanted — or we would have wanted — but we know that they have had to deal with considerable challenges, both internally and externally. This morning's horrible attack on Afghanistan's Parliament and the fighting in Kunduz and Badakhshan provinces are saddening reminders of those challenges. So, let us be realistic about it and acknowledge that things are progressing pretty well, all things considered. But let us also be realistic about the road ahead. It is going to be difficult.

We firmly believe that Afghanistan can have a great future, both as a self-reliant and independent country, and as a key player in the developing political and economic architecture of Central Asia. But for that to happen, Afghans — both those in power and those who empower their leaders — have to decide whether they want to forge a national future or whether they will revert to the pursuit of narrow self-advantage and, in so doing, consign their country and themselves to another bout of fratricidal introspection. We earnestly hope that the Afghan people will choose the former course.

The trials through which Afghanistan has been passing over the past 15 years are incredible, in the true sense of that word. Afghanistan was the locus of the forces that brought down the Twin Towers in New York City, damaged the Pentagon in Washington and, for all we know, might also have taken out the Congress of the United States of America or the White House. Those attacks, while centred on the United States, were an attack on universal human values and therefore an attack on the basic principles that underlie this Organization.

The response of the international community to those events was itself incredible — a marshalling of effort both to defeat Al-Qaida and the Taliban and to restore Afghanistan and bring it back into the community of nations. That effort bears comparison to the Marshall Plan and the restoration of democracy in Europe and the economic revival after the Second World War. We hope that the Afghan people recognize that that was no small or narrow self-interested undertaking. We should not lose that perspective when we consider the Secretary-General's most recent report (S/2015/422).

Clearly, there are things to be concerned about, including the slow pace in the establishment of the apparatus of Government at both the national and the provincial levels; the postponement of parliamentary elections; and the continued undermining of Afghanistan's economy and social cohesion by organized crime, especially in connection with the opium trade. Most worrisome of all is the deterioration in the security situation brought about, principally, by the Taliban, who simultaneously hold themselves out as willing to engage with the Afghan Government while increasing their fight against the Afghanistan National Security Forces. Such internally inconsistent efforts are muddle-headed and betray a self-interestedness that negates any claim to be acting for a higher purpose, whether religious, national or local.

But there is also progress, both in the establishment of the institutions of Government and in the maintenance of peace in many parts of the country, despite the efforts of those who seek to tear things down rather build their country up. Maintaining peace in such an environment is no small achievement, and we need to recognize that. We want Afghanistan to succeed. New Zealand's commitment to and investment in Afghanistan — especially to Bamyan province — has lasted longer than our commitment to either the First or the Second World War. And our contribution was, we know, mirrored and exceeded by many others.

In that context, we note, in particular, the willingness of the United States to extend its military and economic contribution under the New Development Partnership.

That is why we continue to pay close attention to Afghanistan and why we continue to support the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. It is the means by which we, the international community, manifest our willingness to walk with and work with the Government of Afghanistan as it navigates the difficult road ahead.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to begin by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Haysom, for his presentation. I also thank the Ambassador of Afghanistan, Mr. Tanin, for his statement, and I associate myself in advance with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Like many before me, I would like to express France's strongest condemnation of this morning's attack on the Parliament in Kabul by the Taliban. France stands by the Afghan authorities and the Afghan people in their fight against terrorism, and we will continue to support democracy and the rule of law in that country. We also offer our full support to Spain in ensuring that the Council can react as quickly as possible to this unacceptable new terrorist attack.

As underscored by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2015/422), the political progress being made in Afghanistan is noteworthy, and we welcome the recent appointments in the Government. With the presidential elections already a year ago, the National Unity Government must be able to work at its full capacity, and we welcome the efforts made towards that end. We hope that the reform agenda will be upheld, in particular with regard to electoral reforms which will make it possible to maintain the democratic momentum that began during the holding of the presidential elections in 2014. We also recall the importance of the senior officials' meeting scheduled for 5 September in Kabul, which should enable the adoption of a revised Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.

But many challenges remain. On the security front, the spring offensive led to an unacceptably sharp increase in the number of civilians killed. We also deplore the attacks carried out against the institutions of the Afghan State, including that on Parliament this morning and also those against judicial bodies or their representatives. Such attacks are a reminder of the need to maintain our decisive support for the rule of law in Afghanistan.

On the human-rights front, the lynching on 19 March of a young woman, Farkhunda, is shocking. It is a reminder of the extent to which women continue to be the victims of violence in Afghanistan. We hope that Afghan civil society and the authorities will continue to mobilize to ensure that the law on the elimination of violence against women is implemented fully and effectively.

In addition, we are counting on the continued mobilization of the Afghan authorities against drug trafficking. This is a subject of great concern for France because it is a major destabilizing factor for Afghanistan and its neighbours. We encourage the authorities to continue their work to curb drug production and trafficking.

In Afghanistan we are still facing a difficult environment, and, in that context, the efforts of the international community must continue for the long-term so as to support the country and enable it to achieve stability, prosperity and a democratic future. The commitments made during the London Conference on Afghanistan in December 2014 must be upheld, because Afghanistan, more than every before, needs the support of its partners. The agreement signed with the International Monetary Fund is an important element of support for the long term. France will continue to stand with Afghanistan within the framework of the Franco-Afghan Friendship and Cooperation Treaty. We are contributing to the European Union commitment to Afghanistan in the amount of €1.4 billion for the period from 2014 to 2020.

Finally, regional support is an important requirement for guaranteeing the conditions conducive to a lasting peace in Afghanistan. We welcome the efforts made along those lines by Afghanistan's regional partners.

Let me now say a word about the role of the United Nations. While Afghanistan is at a turning point in its history, the United Nations will continue to play a decisive role during this Transformation Decade. The support provided by the United Nations and its agencies to the Government remains key, particularly in order to enable the population to benefit from Government programmes and international assistance. But that role must evolve and be adapted to the situation. In that regard, we welcome the establishment of a dialogue mechanism between the United Nations, Afghanistan and donors on the desirable evolution of the support provided to the country by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. France will be involved in that dialogue and will pay particular attention to the initial results of consultations.

In conclusion, I would like to commend all of the United Nations personnel, who, under the leadership of Mr. Haysom, are working in particularly difficult conditions in Afghanistan. They have our sincere admiration.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): Angola would like to start by condemning in the strongest terms today's heinous terrorist attack on the Parliament of Afghanistan, which reflects the terrorists' hatred of the country's institutions. We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Mr. Nicholas Haysom, for presenting the quarterly report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (S/2015/422). We also thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan for his insights into his country's situation.

We commend the work of UNAMA as it discharges its mandate in very difficult conditions, at a time when Afghanistan is struggling to establish a society based on the fundamental values of peace, human rights and social equity. In the most recent debate on UNAMA and the situation in Afghanistan (see S/PV.7403), held in March, the Angolan delegation expressed a comprehensive view of the issue. In today's statement, we will limit ourselves to touching on some of the most pressing issues mentioned in the Secretary-General's report.

The report highlights relevant developments in the past three months. The near-completion of the National Unity Government and the confirmation by the legislative body of Government nominations — which include four women, and we commend that — was a decisive development in the country's political life and a step towards closing the complex presidential electoral process. Other developments include President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah's reinvigorated efforts to advance the realization of the reliance agenda; the establishment of a social contract between Government and citizens promoting transparency and accountability in implementing socioeconomic reforms and policies in priority areas to advance economic growth; and the establishment of a Special Commission on Electoral Reform, which we expect to get to work in earnest in order to complete the electoral process, since comprehensive electoral reforms are perceived to be crucial to restoration of the people's trust in the Afghan democratic process.

Also notable are the Government's continued efforts to launch a process of peace and reconciliation; its stated commitment to bringing about peace through dialogue, translating Afghans' deeply felt desire for peace, despite a missing element, that is, the willingness of the armed opposition to meet the Government in direct talks; the mobilization of backing from regional partners for the peace and reconciliation process; and the steps taken by Afghanistan towards building regional confidence and cooperation through its full commitment, together with the Government of Pakistan, to work for peace; the reintegration of a relatively large number of anti-Government elements; the efforts of the High Peace Council to counter fundamentalism, which fuels violence; the call by the countries of the region to the Taliban to join the peace process; and President Ghani's pledge to focus on establishing peace. Those and other important political initiatives give us hope that Afghanistan may be entering a new and decisive phase.

However, the political progress I just outlined is taking place against the backdrop of a deteriorating security situation, with increased violence related to the conflict, as the Afghan National Security Forces have sought to contain the insurgent activity that has resulted in an increasing number of civilian casualties, the vast majority of them caused by the Taliban and anti-Government groups. In that regard, we share the view that long-term stability and prosperity in Afghanistan depend on an inclusive internal reconciliation process and regional cooperation against the insurgents, and on curbing the flow of foreign terrorist fighters into Afghanistan. Afghanistan's neighbours should be aware that Afghanistan is the battlefront and that peace in Afghanistan is fundamental if they are to keep peace in the region.

We praise the efforts of the Afghan authorities to engage actively with regional partners and, above all, with Pakistan. Additionally, President Ghani Ahmadzai's visit to Iran in April, the meetings held with the country's hierarchy and mutual pledges to enhance cooperation in the areas of security, information-sharing, counter-narcotics, water resources and refugees and migrants are encouraging signals of an emerging regional cooperation between Afghanistan and the countries of the region.

Furthermore, President Ghani Ahmadzai's visit to India and India's reiterated readiness to join the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement are positive developments with respect to Afghanistan's external standing. We believe that implementation of those agreements will contribute to the social and economic development of Afghanistan and its full integration within the subregion.

We are deeply concerned over violence against women in Afghanistan. We urge an end to impunity for crimes committed against women and call for accountability on the part of the country's criminal-justice system. Furthermore, we condemn the public murder of a woman by a crowd of men on 19 March, in broad daylight, in the capital, which illustrates the continuing threat of violence against women. We believe that it is essential, with respect to the credibility of the justice system, that allegations of abuse and ill treatment are thoroughly investigated and properly prosecuted so that those responsible are held accountable for their crimes.

On 19 April, UNAMA and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights released a report, entitled "Justice through the eyes of Afghan women: cases of violence against women addressed through mediation and court adjudication". We hope that the recommendations contained therein will contribute to improving women's access to justice and a change in the mindset of Afghan men towards women.

Finally, we express our hope that the international community will maintain its commitment towards

Afghanistan and that the long-suffering Afghan people will be able to find a way to peace, national reconciliation and economic and social development and that Afghanistan's Transformation Decade will become a reality.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Haysom for his briefing on the situation in Afghanistan and Mr. Tanin for delivering, as usual, his highly comprehensive statement. We share extreme concern over the description that the Council heard today. The Russian Federation is troubled by the deterioration of the situation in the country, further proof of which is today's attack against the Afghan Parliament.

Of particular worry to the Russian Federation and our neighbours in the Commonwealth of Independent States in Central Asia are the very significant terrorist threat and the fact that insurgents have recently consolidated control in the northern regions of the country, especially in Kunduz province. We cannot allow the situation to collapse and thus destabilize the entire region.

That is precisely the manner in which the matter was discussed in the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, of the Council of the Commonwealth of Independent States and of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. We have more than once expressed our concern that the insurgents will attempt to take advantage of the withdrawal of foreign military forces from Afghanistan to alter the balance of forces to their benefit.

Expectations in terms of the resumption of the offensive in the spring and summer have, unfortunately, been fully confirmed. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/422) contains worrisome statistics in that regard. The number of attacks by the armed opposition throughout the entire country, particularly in the northern regions, has increased. We hope that the Afghan forces will prove themselves worthy in assuming that task and thus be capable of countering the threat on their own.

It is our opinion that the threat generated by Islamic State in Afghanistan is continuing to grow. We are grateful to Mr. Haysom for clearly mentioning that in his briefing. We call on the Secretary-General to devote priority attention to the topic in his next report.

My country is extremely dispirited about the situation regarding the illegal production and trafficking in narcotics in the country. Today, the volume of drug production, according to the Secretary-General's report, equals 13 per cent of the country's gross domestic product. It is well known that a significant share of those resources is used to finance extremist and terrorist organizations. In order to neutralize the Afghan drug threat, collective efforts are necessary, using all of the means available in our arsenals.

The remaining foreign military forces in the country continue to pretend that the problem does not exist. At the same time, the flow of heroin from Afghanistan now affects not only bordering States, but Western European States as well.

The Russian Federation has been working hard, jointly with our partners in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, to combat drug trafficking through bilateral cooperation arrangements with Afghanistan. I should note that for Afghanistan itself, the problem is no less acute than it is for the international community.

In the framework of our bilateral cooperation with Afghanistan, we continue to train Afghan narcotics police in the training institutes of Russia's Ministry of Interior and the Federal Drug Control Service. We cannot let our attention to be distracted from that problem.

We commend the efforts of President Ghani Ahmadzai to establish a dialogue with the armed opposition with a view to advancing the national reconciliation process. We welcome the position of President Ghani Ahmadzai, who seeks to comply with the principles of national reconciliation enshrined in resolution 1988 (2011). Those principles are quite clear, requiring the renunciation of violence, recognition of the Afghan Constitution and the severing of links to Al-Qaida — which, for some reason, was not mentioned in the Secretary-General's report — and links with other terrorist organizations. It also clearly requires a genuine willingness to pursue peace.

At the same time, we support the effective participation of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in coordinating the efforts of the international community to assist the Afghan people. It is important to continue maintaining the Council's effective sanctions regime, which remains an important instrument in the fight against terrorism, aimed at Al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations.

In particular, we wish to note that the path leading towards the country's stabilization requires a single consolidated position among the key external players. It also requires a single-minded focus on combating the terrorist threat that is tearing the country apart.

Resolving the security situation will depend on the creation of economic opportunities for the country. It is in the interest of all parties to achieve stabilization in Afghanistan as quickly as possible, so as to shift efforts and investments towards economic development and towards establishing broad cooperation.

The Russian Federation will continue developing cooperation efforts with friendly Afghanistan, both in a bilateral format and through regional integration organizations, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, where Afghanistan enjoys observer status. Russia is committed to building an independent, thriving, free and stable Afghanistan.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I join others in thanking the Secretary-General for his report (S/2015/422), Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom for his briefing and Ambassador Zahir Tanin for his remarks this morning.

I join my Spanish colleague and others in strongly condemning this morning's attack on the Afghan Parliament. The Taliban have claimed responsibility. It was a callous attack. It once again targeted civilians in violation of international humanitarian law. My deepest sympathies go out to all those affected, their families and friends. I should like to pay tribute to the swift and effective response by the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

The Taliban will further alienate the Afghan people by such attacks. Afghanistan has clearly demonstrated its commitment to democracy, as the Afghan people courageously turned out to vote in the millions during last year's elections. The United Kingdom will continue to stand alongside all those who seek a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic future for Afghanistan.

After many difficult years and despite such attacks, Afghanistan has now begun its Transformation Decade, with full ownership of its national affairs. The country is moving forward. Cabinet ministers and provincial governors are being appointed, and the National Unity Government has set out an impressive vision for reform at the London Conference. These reforms could have a real impact on day-to-day life in Afghanistan by improving citizens' rights, strengthening accountability and promoting economic growth.

It is vital that this vision now be translated into actions to address Afghanistan's many challenges. The remaining Government appointments should be made swiftly. Reforms should be implemented quickly in order to build a better future for all Afghans. The forthcoming meeting of senior officials from the international community and Afghanistan to be held in September 2015 should take stock of how far the country has come in tackling corruption, strengthening the economy and improving women's rights. That meeting is also a chance to look ahead to the longer-term development of Afghanistan. We hope that it will agree on a refreshed framework between the international community and the Government.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has a crucial role to play throughout this process in support of the Government's reforms. Its continued presence in Afghanistan underlines the international community's commitment.

This year's fighting season and the intensification of armed clashes is testing the capabilities of the ANSF. They are showing that they are capable of meeting this challenge. I pay tribute to their resolve and the sacrifices they are making for the sake of security and stability in Afghanistan.

Let me take this opportunity to reiterate the United Kingdom's commitment to a strong and self-sufficient ANSF. We are proud of our support for the Afghan National Army officer academy, and we will maintain our contribution of $110 million each year to the ANSF until at least 2017.

However, no matter the strength of the ANSF, a political settlement remains the best prospect for bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan. We welcome President Ghani's commitment to a peace process and his efforts to build regional cooperation for a peaceful and stable Afghanistan.

The continued violence experienced by innocent civilians gives us a clear illustration of why a political solution is so vital. The rise in civilian casualties highlighted in the Secretary-General's report is worrying. We deplore the Taliban's large-scale attacks against civilian targets, including Government officials, legal professionals and those participating in cultural events. These are in stark contrast to Taliban statements on protecting civilians. The time has come for the Taliban to sit down at the negotiating table for the sake of the people of Afghanistan.

Turning to the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, we welcome President Ghani's commitment to making fundamental and sustainable changes for Afghan women. These need to include participation in decision-making and economic empowerment. Despite his commitment, women and girls continue to face significant challenges, including violence against them and against those who defend their rights. We condemn the horrific killing of Farkhunda Malikzada in March. Her death was a tragic reminder of the scale of the challenge facing Afghan women and girls.

There are two immediate steps that the Government of Afghanistan can take to improve the lives of women and girls: first, implement fully the law on the elimination of violence against women, so that the perpetrators of these terrible crimes face justice; secondly, publish soon Afghanistan's national action plan for women and peace and security. We hope it will set a clear framework for improving women's rights across the country.

In highlighting the challenges, we should not lose sight of progress. As my Afghan colleague outlined, Afghanistan now has women running the Ministries of Higher Education, Women's Affairs, Counter Narcotics and Labour and Social Affairs. For the second time in Afghanistan's history, there is a female provincial governor, and only last week, the first female judge was nominated to the Supreme Court and the first female officers graduated from the United Kingdom-supported national officer academy. All of this would have been unthinkable a decade ago. These gains must be protected and further promoted.

Let me close by stressing that we must never forget the sacrifices made by the men and women of Afghanistan and the international community to bring Afghanistan this far. Thanks to their commitment, so much has been achieved over the past 13 years. Life expectancy is rising. Health care is improving. Millions of children — and millions of girls in particular — are now receiving education. Yet as the country moves forward and tackles the challenges that remain, this morning's attack shows that we cannot afford to let international attention to Afghanistan slip. Through this regular debate and through the work of UNAMA, we must maintain our focus.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to thank Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, for their statements.

We join others in condemning today's terrorist attack and would like to fully support the draft press statement presented by the Spanish delegation. The Security Council must present a unified front on the issue of terrorism.

We welcome the fact that the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has launched a new phase in its political process aimed at overcoming the instability caused by the successive foreign interventions of the end of last century, the consequences of which are still making themselves known.

We welcome the firm commitment by the Government and the people of Afghanistan to meet the challenges facing the country with a view to strengthening peace and stability. The formation of the National Unity Government under the leadership of President Ashraf Ghani, who has made national reconciliation his goal, is a highly positive development, as it will allow the country to strengthen its institutions. In that regard, the dialogue initiated with the armed insurgents in order to reach a political agreement for peace is encouraging.

Achieving peace and strengthening the political process will require the full participation of the Afghan people, including women. We therefore welcome the fact that the President has appointed four women to senior positions within the central Administration. We support the participation of women in decision-making in various Government areas to decisively combat the exclusion of women and the violence committed against them in Afghan society.

The holding of parliamentary elections is a pending issue of particular importance for the strengthening of the State. While awaiting the electoral reforms agreed to on 21 September 2014, we encourage the Afghan Government to undertake the necessary efforts to hold those elections.

One of the most important challenges facing the current Government is the economic situation, which presents great challenges, given the devastating effects of war. We therefore urge the international community to provide all necessary assistance to promote sustainable economic and social development in Afghanistan.

We want to highlight the work carried out by UNAMA in terms of peacebuilding. Meetings between Afghan society and various levels of Government aimed at strengthening the people's leadership in the peacebuilding process is a major breakthrough. While recognizing their contributions, we believe that UNAMA should continue its work in full coordination with the Government.

The reintegration of former combatants is one of the most important elements for efforts to build peace and political and social stability and an objective that our country warmly welcomes. In that regard, we recognize the efforts of Afghanistan to reintegrate into society more than 10,000 former combatants, who handed over approximately 7,000 weapons that they had in their possession. Despite that progress, the terrorist threat remains in the form of the presence of foreign terrorist fighters, who, filled with hatred and intolerance, are trying to take Afghanistan back to an earlier time.

The security situation remains fragile, as noted in the report (S/2015/422) of the Secretary-General. Terrorist groups operating in Central Asia persist in their plans to destabilize the region, including Afghanistan. The presence of groups affiliated with cells of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria is another demonstration of the growing threat to regional stability posed by the advance of violent non-State actors. The reports indicate a considerable increase in the number of extremist armed groups in various parts of the country as a result of military operations in neighbouring countries, which represents a new challenge to the stability of Afghanistan. We would like to underscore the importance of the cooperation of neighbouring countries, including Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, which have played an crucial role in providing shelter to Afghan refugees affected by armed violence. We welcome the voluntary repatriation programmes for refugees that those Governments have promoted, with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

We are convinced that strengthening the country's armed forces is essential to building the State so that it can effectively combat the various groups linked to terrorism and transnational organized crime operating in the country. It is vital that Afghanistan recovers all its capacites so that it can address all of its issues in a sovereign and independent way.

We also welcome the efforts made by the Afghan authorities to combat the scourge of drugs, although there has been an increase in poppy cultivation. Eradication is one area where there has been considerable progress, despite the resistance of insurgent groups. The cultivation of and trafficking in drugs continues to be a key source of financing for the Taliban and other criminal and terrorist groups.

We are concerned about the increase in the number of attacks on the civilian population as a result of internal conflict. The infant mortality rate has risen as a result of armed clashes, with a high number of cases involving explosives and landmines. We therefore believe that there should be an increase in assistance provided by the international community to help remove such devices, which cause so much harm to civilians, particularly children.

In conclusion, we hope that through a broad and inclusive political process, peace and stability will ultimately take root in Afghanistan. That will require the joint efforts of the Afghan Government and people, with the assistance and support of the international community, in order to overcome the economic and social conditions that fuel extremism and violence.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Nicholas Haysom, and Ambassador Tanin for their briefings. My delegation expresses its appreciation for all the important work that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations family are doing in Afghanistan.

Lithuania aligns itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the European Union (EU).

Afghanistan is continuing its difficult transformation towards peace and self-reliance. The deaths, caused by an improvised explosive device, on 21 June of 16 civilians who were returning to their village in the Marja district of Helmand province, and the attempted attack on the Afghan Parliament earlier today, which injured 31 civilians, are only a few of the many reminders of how dramatically challenging the situation remains. We firmly condemn all such attacks. Faced with these daunting challenges, it is essential that the Afghan Government continue demonstrating its firm determination to end the conflict and improve the lives of its citizens.

We welcome the completion of the Cabinet formation, which, due to the nature of the National Unity Government, was a difficult yet absolutely necessary event. We encourage Afghan leaders to complete pending appointments of officials, including in the justice sector and at the provincial level. The new leaders have delivered on their promise to appoint four women ministers. In addition, President Ghani has nominated the first-ever female Supreme Court judge in Afghanistan. I am sure that they will be a valuable asset to the Government's work and will also have a real impact on the promotion of women's rights across the country.

It is crucial that the Unity Government create an accountable, transparent and effective Government. After decades of corruption and obscure dealings, Afghanistan is in dire need of bold reforms. In that regard, President Ghani's agenda, entitled "Realizing self-reliance", as presented last year in London, is the way forward. The President's initiatives on reviewing Government revenues and spending, formulating 100-day action plans for each ministry and establishing an independent anti-corruption commission are certainly steps in the right direction. It is crucial not to lose momentum and to persevere in their implementation, as such reforms will improve service delivery, increase citizens' participation and strengthen their trust in elected officials.

The need for progress on electoral reform deserves a separate mention. While the establishment of the Special Commission on Electoral Reform provided a mechanism towards enhancing electoral integrity, the Commission has yet to start its work. The current mandate of the lower house of the National Assembly expired and has been extended, but there is still no electoral calendar. That must be urgently addressed, along with the implementation of socioeconomic policies and a development agenda. Counter-narcotics policies should be promoted as well, including through creating incentives for farmers to turn to legal livelihoods.

At the same time, existing security concerns must be addressed, since a continuing lack of security may thwart progress in other areas. As the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/422) shows, the number of civilian casualties in the reporting period increased by almost a quarter compared with that in 2014, continuing the trend of record high numbers. Improvised explosive devices remain the second leading cause of civilian casualties.

The anti-Government elements' spring offensive has been more intensive than the year before, with a 45 per cent increase in armed clashes. We condemn the continuing attacks by anti-Government elements and their deliberate targeting of civilians, including the 13 May Taliban attack on a Kabul guesthouse and on those working in the justice system. We call on all parties to comply with international humanitarian law, which prohibits attacks against civilians. In that regard, it is vital that the Government push forward an Afghan-led reconciliation and peace process.

More needs to be done to protect women's rights and expand their access to justice. Reports estimate that up to 87 per cent of Afghan women have experienced domestic abuse at least once. Domestic violence, coupled with high maternal mortality, a lack of economic rights and limited opportunities for justice, makes Afghanistan one of the world's most dangerous countries for women. The latest UNAMA report on violence against women shows that Afghanistan's court system is failing to provide adequate access for women who are victims of violence. We encourage the Afghan Government to strengthen access to the justice system and increase women's trust in legal proceedings, which are often overshadowed by corrupt practices.

My delegation welcomes the first human-rights dialogue between the European Union and Afghanistan, which took place on 15 June in Kabul. We encourage further discussions, in a cooperative spirit, on ways to improve the human-rights situation in Afghanistan.

The future of Afghanistan depends not only on the Afghans themselves, but also on the actions of their neighbours. A peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan is in the interest of all the countries of the region. Lithuania commends the Government's efforts aimed at improving bilateral relations with its neighbours, including Pakistan, and in multilateral cooperation forums, such as activities carried out under the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process. Any positive steps on peace and stability taken by Afghanistan should be reciprocated with tangible actions by neighbouring countries. To cite some practical examples, from 2012 to 2015 Lithuania provided funding for a regional project involving Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. That initiative contributed to the development of a compatible veterinary control system in the four Asian countries, in line with international standards and the EU legal framework.

In June 2015, after 13 years of active participation in Afghanistan, the Lithuanian Special Operations Forces completed the longest-ever non-stop Lithuanian international mission abroad. The mission's success was a result of effective cooperation between the Government of Afghanistan and its allies. As a result, the Afghan National Security Forces have gained the useful experience they need to ensure their country's security on their own.

Lithuania remains engaged in the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, which is one of the major commitments of the Alliance in 2015 and 2016. The mission's mandate will end in December 2016. With this in mind, we need to discuss the further engagement of the international community in Afghanistan after 2016. The international community has to continue assisting and supporting Afghanistan as it continues to build a secure and just future. We welcome the establishment of a Tripartite Commission, as per Security Council resolution 2210 (2015), to conduct an examination of the role, structure and activities of all United Nations entities in Afghanistan. We encourage all participants to actively engage in that process.

Mr. Olguín Cigarroa (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the briefings given by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Mr. Nicholas Haysom, and by Ambassador Tanin.

Chile deplores and strongly condemns the attack committed today against the Parliament of Afghanistan and the use of force against unarmed civilians. We would like to recall that it is of the utmost importance that authorities ensure the protection of civilians and prevent anti-Government forces from undermining trust in the new Government and in the democratic process.

The development of a modern, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan will depend, to a large extent, on the success of the process of reconciliation in the framework of a broad-based strategy for the protection and promotion of human rights that envisions access to education, health care and jobs for all Afghans. In order to achieve that, it is crucial that progress achieved by Afghanistan in the area of human rights since 2001 continue in an accelerated and consolidated manner. By the same token, it is imperative to ensure the full and effective participation of women in decision-making processes. Accordingly, we urge the Government of Afghanistan to implement resolution 1325 (2000) and the law on the elimination of violence against women, so as to ensure that the perpetrators of this type of violence are held accountable for their actions. We are concerned about the security situation in Afghanistan and, particularly, the increase in the deaths of Afghan women and children. We hope that the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict quickly reaches a consensus regarding its conclusions and that those are used to provide better protection to children in Afghanistan.

We remain concerned about radical extremism in Afghanistan and the fact that there are approximately 7,180 foreign terrorist fighters in that country, according to estimates by the Ministry of the Interior. We encourage the Government of Afghanistan and neighbouring countries to implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council in order to slow down the entry of foreign terrorist fighters. Regional and international cooperation is essential in this area, particularly in operations aimed at improving border control. Similarly, it is crucial that the Government prioritize inclusive development in order to address the grievances of disaffected communities. It is vital to implement preventative measures that counter extremist rhetoric and recruitment by terrorists. We would like to reiterate what President Michelle Bachelet said to the Council last January:

> "Social inclusion and inclusive development are the conditions for peace [...]'Over the longer term, the biggest threat to terrorists is not the power of missiles. It is the politics of inclusion [...]. It is education, jobs and real opportunity.'" (*S/PV.7361, pp. 6-7*).

We believe that it is essential to promote dialogue, inclusion and consensus among Afghans, all of which are necessary in building a country capable of standing on its own, with strong democratic institutions and the rule of law. We would like here to reiterate our support for UNAMA's important work in strengthening the country's capabilities. In conclusion, Chile calls once again on the international community to continue its support for the people of Afghanistan and strengthen their capacities, thereby enabling the country to confront the security and development challenges that it faces.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to thank Mr. Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing.

Afghanistan is going through a crucial phase in its history. It is facing a series of ongoing, new and renewed challenges. Accordingly, the international community must work towards providing the necessary assistance to this country for a better future for its children. After many years of war, which has torn Afghanistan apart and destroyed its institutions — and during which the country has taken up a great deal of the international community's efforts and attention — the concept of threats to international peace and security and the our way of handling them have changed forever. Today, more than ever, Afghanistan needs the support of the international community and of the United Nations. That is the real challenge that we face in Afghanistan.

Jordan is extremely concerned at the security situation in Afghanistan, exemplified by the terrorist attack against the Parliament of Afghanistan this morning. We recognize the difficulties that the Afghan authorities are facing in maintaining security and controlling the situation. Accordingly, the international community and, particularly, neighbouring countries must continue to provide support to Afghanistan in its war against terrorism, and must support the Government's efforts in controlling the entire national territory. We therefore encourage international partners to reinforce and improve Afghanistan's capacities, in order to adequately address the situation. In the near future, in cooperation with interested countries and the Government of Afghanistan, we must carry out a comprehensive analysis of the situation in determining how the Council can help bolster security and stability in that country.

Jordan welcomes the fact that the formation of the new Afghan Government has been completed in order to maintain the progress achieved thus far through democracy. That ongoing process has seen the involvement of all Afghans, political parties and national partners in Afghanistan. We welcome the formation of this new Government, and we hope that it marks the start of positive change in the political landscape and in the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan.

Resolving differences among the different components within Afghan society, in order to ensure the stability that the country so desires, will not be possible unless there is national reconciliation throughout Afghanistan, led by the Afghans themselves. Because the use of force and violence by different elements will hinder the achievement of those goals, bringing about a comprehensive peace remains a great challenge in the country. Taking that into account, we would stress the importance of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan's (UNAMA) role and that of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in deploying their good offices to strengthen national reconciliation.

We call upon all the parties to participate constructively in that process.

In view of the Afghan President's announcement that the current legislature will be extended until new elections are held, we appeal to the Special Commission on Electoral Reform to start work as soon as possible and implement all the necessary reforms, avoiding the mistakes of the past and thereby guaranteeing that the electoral process will comply with international standards. We hope that the progress made in that area will be presented to the Security Council at its meeting in September. We would like to emphasize once again the need to expedite the implementation of anti-corruption reform programmes so as to ensure that human rights and the rule of law are upheld. We call upon the Government to intensify its efforts to improve the situation of vulnerable and marginalized groups in the country, and we also emphasize that all matters related to women's rights must be an integral part of all debates on peace, so that women can be more involved in future progress.

Jordan is concerned about Afghanistan's poor economic situation, particularly in view of the fragile security conditions following the terrorist attacks, and we trust that the necessary steps will be taken to improve the economic situation so that donors in the international community regain confidence in the country. One of the most important measures will be the struggle against corruption at all levels of the Government, as the United Nations and international financial institutions have reiterated on various occasions. We call upon the Government to assume its responsibilities and reach that goal, and we urge the donor community and countries in the region to continue to support development and invest jointly in Afghanistan. We welcome the efforts of UNAMA, which is working extremely effectively in various areas under the difficult circumstances in the country, and we encourage it to continue to play that role.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Malaysia.

I join other Security Council members in thanking the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Nicholas Haysom, and Ambassador Tanin for their briefings. My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to the leadership and staff members of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for their unstinting assistance to the Government and people of Afghanistan.

Malaysia deplores and condemns the heinous attack against the Afghan Parliament building earlier today, responsibility for which has been claimed by the Taliban. We offer our condolences and deepest sympathy to the families and loved ones of those killed. Malaysia would emphasize that the only way forward is through peaceful political negotiations. Despite the attack, we hope that Afghanistan will stay the course in finalizing the formation of a National Unity Government based on a power-sharing framework. From our own experience of nation-building through power-sharing and social transformation, we fully understand the importance of mutual respect and inclusiveness in such matters.

Malaysia looks forward to having all parties support the implementation of the agenda set by President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah. It is therefore our hope that those efforts will demonstrate the strong commitment of the Afghan people and Government to an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned decade of transformation. Malaysia reiterates its support for the Afghan Government's efforts to achieve peace and reconciliation, and we are heartened by the extensive engagement between President Ghani and his local and regional interlocutors. We further welcome the progress made in instituting electoral reforms and urge the Government to remain steadfast in introducing those and other reforms.

In our view, the sustained positive atmosphere in the region has become a catalyst for a more open and constructive discourse, and we call on all parties to continue to support that vital process. Key stakeholders in the region should also intensify their efforts to support and assist Afghanistan, including through more substantive dialogues in such regional and multilateral cooperation forums as the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process.

While encouraged by the significant progress on the political front, Malaysia notes that the security situation remains precarious, as seen earlier today. Malaysia joins other Council members in expressing concern at the high number of civilian casualties in the armed conflict, and we also strongly condemn the deliberate targeting of civilians. It is deeply deplorable that Afghan children continue to bear the brunt of the violent conflict in the country, either through being caught in the crossfire or through being caught in attacks with improvised explosive devices or contact with explosive remnants of war. We call on all parties undertaking ground engagements to comply with international humanitarian law and commit to the protection of civilians, including women and children. In that regard, my delegation takes note of the Afghan Government's progress report on its compliance with the action plan it adopted pursuant to resolution 1612 (2005) on children and armed conflict.

We are also concerned by the large number of foreign fighters present in Afghanistan, including those associated with terrorist groups. My delegation further notes that that presence has been a matter of great concern for countries in the region as well, particularly in Central Asia. While there may be an absence of hard evidence to prove that certain terrorist and extremist groups are operating in Afghanistan, that should not prevent us from addressing the root causes of the support for such groups.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the United Nations, the Security Council and the rest of the international community should continue to lend their support, encouragement and assistance to Afghanistan through reconstruction and redevelopment efforts designed to rebuild the country. As a friend and partner of Afghanistan, Malaysia remains committed to supporting the Afghan Government in its efforts to achieve peace, security and stability.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Mukerji (India): At the outset, I would like to express our strong condemnation of this morning's terrorist attack on the Afghan Parliament and express our solidarity with the people and Government of Afghanistan at this hour. Madam President, we thank your delegation for organizing this debate on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). I would also like to thank the Secretary General for his report on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2015/422), his Special Representative, Nicholas Haysom, and Ambassador Zahir Tanin for their briefings earlier this morning.

The President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, paid a State visit to India from 27 to 29 April. That visit further cemented the age-old historical, cultural and geographical links between India and Afghanistan. The leaders of our two countries acknowledged that those links today provide the solid foundation for our strategic partnership, which was in turn forged on the two countries' common perception of challenges and shared interests. Prime Minister Modi of India assured the President of Afghanistan of India's abiding support for Afghanistan's ongoing crucial transitions — political, economic and security — for the decade 2015-2024 and beyond.

I wish, however, to express our concern at the security situation in Afghanistan, as set out in the latest report of the Secretary-General, which mentions that the number of armed clashes has risen by 45 per cent since 2014. The report also highlights the fact that 71 per cent of the violence has been concentrated in the southern, south-eastern and eastern regions of the country. Those statistics are a matter of concern for India and the international community. They only reinforce our view that terrorism, not tribal differences or ethnic rivalries, is the main source of insecurity and instability in Afghanistan. That spurt in violence is taking place at a time when Afghanistan is in the midst of a sensitive and historic political transition under the leadership of President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah. Given the critical phase that the political transition is in, and the deteriorating security situation, we feel that there is a strong case for ensuring that the international community takes a fresh look at the manner in which the drawdown of the international military presence in Afghanistan is being planned.

We have also noted with concern the Secretary-General's reference to an Afghan Ministry of Interior estimate that nearly 7,200 so-called foreign fighters are now in Afghanistan. It is obvious that they could not have entered Afghanistan or continued to sustain their terror attacks there without support from beyond the country's borders. President Ghani has taken exceptional steps to launch a reconciliation process to bring peace to his country. Sadly, those efforts are being repeatedly rebuffed by the Taliban and its supporters.

India will continue to support a truly Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation process within the framework of the Afghan Constitution and the internationally accepted red lines.

I would also like to once again reiterate the importance that we attach to enhancing Afghanistan's economic connectivity to markets in the region. Afghanistan's unique location makes it a natural land bridge for connecting the people and markets of Central Asia to rapidly growing regions in South Asia and beyond. India has been taking steps to help achieve that connectivity. We have indicated our willingness to join an expanded Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan trade and transit agreement; we are working with the Government of Iran to see how the port of Chabahar in Iran could be used to provide Afghanistan with another way of accessing a sea route; and we have unilaterally offered Afghanistan access to the facilities of the integrated checkpoint at Attari at the Wagah-Attari border-crossing point on the international border between India and Pakistan.

Finally, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan must continue to play a leading role in shaping and coordinating the international community's efforts to support Afghanistan's political and economic transition. We are ready to be part of that process, and we look forward to further discussions of UNAMA's continued activities in Afghanistan.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): I would like to start by thanking Special Representative Nicholas Haysom for his perceptive briefing.

Today Afghanistan stands on the cusp of challenge and opportunity. Its path into the Transformation Decade is challenging on every front, dealing as it must with insecurity, economic fragility and the illicit economy, to name only a few issues. We are encouraged to see that the process of forming a Government has been completed, and we also welcome the nomination of the first woman to the country's Supreme Court. All of that marks an auspicious beginning. But much more needs to be done, and as Afghanistan negotiates its many challenges, the international community must continue to stand by it. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has a critical role in that regard. Its work, in line with the priorities set by the Afghan Government, is much valued. All of us have a crucial stake in the stability of Afghanistan, and all of us will have to contribute to that end.

As is noted in the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/422), during the last quarter, we travelled further along a positive trajectory of enhanced engagement between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Last month, my Prime Minister visited Kabul for the second time, his first since the advent of the Government of National Unity. The two leaders agreed that our bilateral relationship would continue to be guided by three core principles, the first being adherence to the policy of non-interference; the second, ensuring that our respective territories are not used against each other; and the third, seeing to it that the enemies of Afghanistan are treated as enemies of Pakistan, and vice versa. The two leaders also agreed to expand trade and deepen regional cooperation, which we hope will usher in a new era of peace and development in our region — a win-win situation for everyone.

Pakistan has the highest possible stake in a peaceful and stable Afghanistan. Terrorism remains a challenge for both our countries and the entire region. We have roundly condemned the recent rise in violence in Afghanistan and the civilian casualties that have been its grim consequence. Nothing justifies the killing of innocent people, the atrocious attack this morning on the Afghan Parliament or, as we saw last week, the destruction of hospitals. We are committed to fighting that menace together and are increasing our military and intelligence cooperation with Kabul. For our part, we have just completed a successful first year for our military operation against terrorists and armed militants in North Waziristan. We are committed to eliminating all terrorists, without distinction. And let me be clear that we will be relentless in rooting out terrorism, whoever its sponsors are, external or internal. Any attempt to destabilize parts of our country or attack its territorial integrity will be responded to forcefully.

Pakistan can and will play a constructive role in promoting peace and security in Afghanistan. That can best be achieved through a process of national reconciliation undertaken and led by the Afghans themselves. We welcome the first tentative steps taken in recent months to advance the reconciliation process, and we hope they will lead to direct talks as well as to a de-escalation of violence. Pakistan will do everything possible to encourage that process. Success will require reciprocal accommodation and, above all, strategic patience.

Sustainable peace in Afghanistan will lead to regional stability, which is the cornerstone of the Heart of Asia process. As co-Chair of the process, Pakistan hosted a meeting of its senior officials in Islamabad in May, providing an opportunity for in-depth discussions on a range of issues, including trans-regional projects such as the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

The Secretary-General's report notes an increase in the voluntary return of Afghan refugees from both Pakistan and Iran. However, Pakistan continues to be one of the top two countries hosting the world's largest refugee population. We welcome the Afghan Government's commitment to the refugees' return and reintegration and hope that UNAMA will continue to assist in that regard. My Prime Minister has assured President Ghani that Afghan refugees will not be forcibly repatriated.

The Secretary-General's report also states that opiates still account for the equivalent of 13 per cent of Afghanistan's gross domestic product. While we welcome efforts by the Afghan law-enforcement authorities to counter that menace, more focused action is required, with international support.

Finally, the ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan transcend the boundaries of time and space. Our destinies are intertwined. As our Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said in Kabul, "We have stood shoulder to shoulder through every trial and tribulation" that the people of Afghanistan have faced. I would therefore like to assure Afghanistan of our continued resolve to remain by its side and help the Afghan people in whatever way we can to accomplish the goals of the Transformation Decade and achieve lasting peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): We align ourselves with the statement to be delivered later on behalf of the European Union, and particularly with its emphasis on the need for electoral reform in Afghanistan, which is fundamental for safeguarding the country's growing political participation and stronger civil society. In addition, I would like to make a few remarks.

First of all, of course, we firmly condemn the attack on the Parliament in Kabul, which is an attack on democracy. Our support for those building a democratic and peaceful Afghanistan must be unwavering.

I would like to thank Nicholas Haysom, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and his staff for his briefing and for the work they are doing on the ground; I also thank Ambassador Tanin for his remarks. Sweden takes particular note of the horrific effects of the conflict on the civilian population that their statements highlight. The continuing rise in civilian casualties is deplorable and worrying.

It has been said many times before, particularly in this Chamber, that this is a critical year for Afghanistan and the Afghan people. It is also a critical year for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). The reduced presence of international security forces in the country and the upcoming review of the UNAMA mandate give us a unique chance to strengthen it in the areas where it can have the greatest effect in the years ahead, including ensuring broad geographical outreach to Afghanistan and a meaningful and successful peace process.

Our support for UNAMA remains strong. We would like to express our gratitude to the women and men employed by UNAMA in Kabul as well as in Afghanistan's more remote provinces. The importance of an ambitious presence on the part of the international community, particularly in remote areas of the country, cannot be stressed enough. The situation demands that the international community speak and act as one. Effective multilateral cooperation and coordination within the framework of the United Nations remain vital.

The recent and reprehensible spiral of attacks on aid workers operating in Afghanistan is appalling. We are currently witnessing a shrinking of the humanitarian space on a large and devastating scale, where aid workers are being prevented from providing basic humanitarian aid or seeking sustainable solutions for the Afghan people. In order to stop that trend from having severe and long-term effects and to end the brutal and pointless violence, humanitarian access must be regained and the safety of aid workers guaranteed.

The conflict can be solved only through peaceful and meaningful dialogue. A peace process must be carefully planned and implemented. There is no room for compromise on the principles, rights and freedoms that have already been agreed on and that are enshrined in the Afghan Constitution. A successful peace process should be inclusive and representative. Excluding segments of the Afghan population, such as women, from taking part would compromise the very foundation of a peaceful society. We therefore call for the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and for the Afghan Government to continue to pursue and safeguard women's full enjoyment of human rights. An inclusive and meaningful peace process has the potential to be transformative in enabling Afghans to believe in an Afghanistan that can fully meet their legitimate aspirations for a more prosperous and secure life.

In 2001, we, the world, were uniquely united around the idea of building a stable future for Afghanistan. In the 14 years since, the world has become more unruly in many ways. There are more conflicts demanding the attention of the international community than ever. Although a lot has been achieved in Afghanistan, much remains to be done. It is therefore important that we reaffirm our support for Afghanistan and honour our commitments. At the same time, there must also be tangible reforms and progress within the country. The road map for the way ahead has already been agreed on, most notably in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework and in the Afghan Government's reform paper "Realizing self-reliance".

Sweden's support for Afghanistan has been substantial and long-term. It began several decades ago, and it will continue with our commitment of $1.2 billion throughout the Transformation Decade. The Afghan Government and people can count on our continued support in this critical time, a time for reforms, for keeping commitments made and realizing self-reliance.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the delegation of the European Union.

Mr. Mayr-Harting: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine and Armenia, align themselves with this statement.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2015/422) and Special

Representative Haysom for his briefing. I would also like to assure Mr. Haysom of our continued strong support for his important mission, and to thank Ambassador Tanin for his statement.

At the outset, let me reiterate how strongly we condemn today's horrendous terrorist attack in Kabul. We offer our heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Afghanistan and to the families of the victims. I would also like to reiterate the European Union's full support for the continuing role played by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and all United Nations agencies in supporting the Afghan people and coordinating the international community's assistance. The role of the United Nations in helping the National Unity Government to implement its priorities remains vitally important, not least by ensuring that Afghans across the country are able to benefit from the Government's programmes and the international assistance to them.

The Secretary-General's report highlights the continued callous disregard by the Taliban and other insurgent groups for Afghan lives, of which the tragic and dramatic events of this day are only the most recent horrendous example. Despite empty protestations to the contrary, the insurgency continues to plan and target attacks against Afghan civilians. That has unfortunately led to record numbers of Afghan civilians being killed. The European Union continues to support the initiation of an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process. But it must be a peace that leads to a cessation of violence, as well as ending any links with terrorism and, importantly, respecting the rights of Afghans set out in the Constitution, notably the rights of women and girls.

The vision for reform set out by the National Unity Government in its "Realizing self-reliance" paper at the London Conference in December 2014 offers a comprehensive programme that the European Union is pleased to endorse and support. The European Union welcomes the near-completion of the formation of the National Unity Government, which must now urgently develop a prioritized plan for undertaking the critical reforms that Afghanistan needs in order to consolidate the progress made to date and provide a foundation for future gains. In particular, the Government must look at immediate measures that can increase economic confidence, generate revenue and enable the Special Commission on Electoral Reform to really begin its work, which is to study how the current electoral system can be reformed. Those measures are vital for the political and economic stability that Afghanistan needs in order to make progress in addressing long-standing societal issues. They include the prevalence of corruption and the threats posed by drugs and organized crime, the lack of the rule of law, as exemplified by the dysfunctionality of the justice system, and the continued shame of the mistreatment of women and children.

The European Union calls for those issues to serve as the basis for a refreshed Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF), to which both the Government and the international community committed at the London Conference. The upcoming senior officials' meeting in Kabul will provide a clear opportunity for the Government to substantiate and prioritize the vision that President Ghani Ahmadzai outlined in London, generating a specific programme for reform set out in a refreshed TMAF with which all Afghans can identify. That Framework can be the basis for the continued exceptional levels of assistance provided by the international community, including the European Union and its member States. The European Union encourages Afghanistan to continue the active engagement with its regional partners shown during the past three months, given that regional cooperation is a driver of stability and prosperity not only for Afghanistan but also for the region at large.

In conclusion, the legitimate aspirations of Afghans for greater prosperity and stability in Afghanistan cannot be beholden to the whims of insurgent groups. The EU will work with and support the National Unity Government in establishing a reform programme that addresses the critical issues that continue to be barriers to progress in Afghanistan. This remains a situation in which the United Nations will continue to be vitally important in supporting the Government's plans, and I reiterate the European Union's ongoing support for the role of UNAMA.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Okamura (Japan): Allow me to express my gratitude to Malaysia for convening this important meeting. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, for his comprehensive briefing. We are grateful to him and his dedicated team for the laudable work they carry out under difficult circumstances. I would also like to thank Ambassador Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan for his statement.

We strongly condemn the attack on the Afghan Parliament this morning. We reiterate our solidarity with the people of Afghanistan and express our heartfelt sympathies to the victims of that crime and their families.

When tens of millions of Afghan men and women took to the polls last year, we knew that Afghanistan's path to self-reliance would present vast opportunities and important challenges. As we approach the half-year mark of Afghanistan's Transformation Decade, we see signs of both.

The National Unity Government is near completion and is strengthening economic and political ties with regional and international partners. On the other hand, economic growth remains weak. We are also witnessing an alarming uptick in violence, which has claimed the lives of a record number of civilians. A strong and inclusive political leadership is needed to overcome these security challenges and pave the way for economic sustainability.

In the light of that situation, we are concerned that electoral reform has not yet commenced. Furthermore, it is disconcerting that the schedule of parliamentary elections, which were to take place before 21 May, according to the Afghan Constitution, has yet to be decided on.

Cognizant of the fact that political certainty underpins security and economic growth, we call for the timely implementation of electoral reforms and parliamentary elections. We likewise look to the Government led by President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah to accelerate its reform process and address the immediate challenges, including corruption, security and the economy. As Afghanistan works towards peace, prosperity and self-reliance, we consider the following issues to be of continued importance: strengthening governance, advancing political reconciliation and cementing the foundations of a sustainable economy.

First, as Afghanistan takes its first steps towards self-reliance, we see that the resolve and capabilities of the Government are being tested. To that effect, we welcome the fact that Afghanistan is making efforts to strengthen governance. Of particular relevance is the fight against corruption, which includes the judiciary and local governments. As the Afghan Government has rightly noted, corruption raises the costs of development and damages its credibility in the eyes of its people.

We are also alarmed by the security situation and the record high number of civilian casualties on the ground, including in the northern provinces of Kunduz and Badakhstan. We likewise note with concern the presence of foreign fighters in the country. However, we remain confident that Afghanistan's law-enforcement and security forces are up to the task. To that end, Japan will continue to assist Afghanistan to strengthen its law-enforcement capacity, principally through the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan, to which Japan has hitherto contributed more than $1 billion. Our assistance has helped Afghanistan double the size of its police force in four years. Furthermore, knowing that effective law enforcement is contingent upon capable and dedicated individuals, Japan has been providing capacity-building in fields as diverse as literacy education and legal training. For example, Japan, in cooperation with Turkey and NATO, is currently providing assistance for the training of 325 female police officers in Turkey, in the light of the importance of protecting women's rights.

Secondly, political reconciliation is part and parcel of Afghanistan's long-term stability. In that regard, we welcome the Government's engagement with national and regional actors in promoting reconciliation. Furthermore, we welcome the facilitation by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan of civil society-led dialogue towards that end. Japan, for its part, has been supporting the peaceful reintegration of ex-combatants into Afghan society. As a leading contributor to the Afghanistan peace and reintegration programme and other efforts, Japan has contributed to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of approximately 60,000 ex-combatants, the disbandment of 737 armed groups and the collection of 276,000 weapons. Japan looks forward to further progress and to the consolidation of Afghanistan's democratic path to peace and prosperity.

Thirdly, economic opportunity and growth are legitimate aspirations for all Afghans. We are therefore concerned by the economic slowdown, which, among other factors, has been attributed to political and security uncertainties. Nonetheless, the long-term drivers of growth, particularly human capital and economic connectivity, are encouraging. Through assistance from Japan and the international community, the number of schoolchildren has increased nine-fold, to 9.2 million in 12 years. Concerning economic connectivity, we have helped lay more than 700 kilometres of new trunk roads that stretch throughout the country. Kabul International Airport, rehabilitated with Japan's assistance, has increased passenger traffic by 150 per cent in a span of five years. Furthermore, on 2 June, quite recently, Japan approved the disbursement of $25 million in counterpart funds to help the Afghan Government to conclude a civil airspace management contract. Furthermore, Japan, in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, among others, is also working to strengthen productivity in agriculture, which is the largest source of employment in the country. In order to maximize the economic potential with which Afghanistan is endowed, we look to the Government to implement its reform programme entitled "Realizing self-reliance" to address fiscal vulnerabilities and improve security and political stability.

To conclude, Japan and the international community will stand by Afghanistan as it overcomes its initial challenges and cements its foundations towards self-reliance. We acknowledge and welcome the fact that a Tripartite Commission with the participation of donor countries has been set up to examine the role, structure and activities of all United Nations entities in Afghanistan. Regardless of its form, Japan would like to reaffirm its strong solidarity with the Afghan people and its firm commitment to assisting that country on its path towards peace, prosperity and self-reliance under the principle of mutual accountability.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Eler (Turkey): I would like start by strongly condemning the heinous terrorist attack perpetrated against the Afghan Parliament today. We express our feelings of solidarity with the Government and the people of Afghanistan and underline once again that Turkey stands by Afghanistan in its struggle against terrorism.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2015/422), and his Special Representative, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, and Ambassador Zahir Tanin for their briefings.

We welcome the completion of the formation of the Cabinet in Afghanistan and reiterate our wish for success to the National Unity Government. Afghanistan has achieved significant progress in every field for the last 13 years. In order to maintain those achievements and continue to build upon them, the international community's continuing support to Afghanistan, especially during the Transformation Decade, is of great importance. We believe that the withdrawal of the international presence from Afghanistan should not be calendar-based, but condition-based.

Turkey fully supports the Afghan Government in its efforts to bring peace, stability and prosperity to Afghanistan. The peace and reconciliation process is of utmost importance for achieving lasting peace and stability in that country. We hope that Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation efforts yield positive results.

Turkey's commitment to Afghanistan is long-term. We make comprehensive contributions to Afghanistan both at the bilateral level and through the United Nations and NATO. In the field of security, Turkey assumed framework-nation responsibility for the Kabul region within NATO's Resolute Support Mission. Furthermore, as of 1 January, we took on the management and security responsibilities for the Kabul International Airport for two years.

We have confirmed our pledge of $60 million to the Afghan national defence and security forces for the period from 2015 to 2017, and have already put the first year's commitment into effect. The Turkish armed forces have trained some 17,500 Afghan National Army personnel since 2001. Furthermore, to date a total of 1,956 Afghan police cadets have been trained in four six-month programmes, and 494 Afghan policewomen cadets have also been trained in similar programmes. Additionally, a total of 1,374 Afghan police cadets were trained at the centre attached to the Wardak provincial reconstruction team, until it ceased to function. In addition, Turkey organized 82 specialized training programmes for Afghan law-enforcement officials on various law-enforcement subjects, including counter-narcotics, and plans to continue to do so.

Our development aid programme for the Afghan people is the most comprehensive such programme directed to another country in Turkey's history. Through it, Turkey has completed around 800 projects in Afghanistan, valued at more than $300 million, since 2001, and has done so in every province of Afghanistan without giving priority to any particular ethnic group. We have also committed $150 million to development efforts in Afghanistan for the period from 2015 to 2017. With respect to humanitarian assistance, we have completed 51 projects worth $1.7 million.

Lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan can be possible only within a regional framework that taps the positive energy and increased cooperation within its region. On that understanding, Turkey will continue to support dialogue between Afghanistan and its neighbours. We look forward to the next ministerial meeting of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process, to be held in Islamabad. While we welcome the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2015/422), we would like to complement the section on regional cooperation by adding that within the Istanbul Process, Turkey, as co-leader of the counter-terrorism confidence-building measures section, organized a three-day course on defence against suicide bombing in Ankara in April 2015. Turkey will continue to carry out similar activities within the Process.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that we will continue to contribute to the security, development and capacity-building efforts of Afghanistan.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Braun (Germany): To start with, let me join those who have thanked the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Nicholas Haysom, for his comprehensive briefing today. I would also like to thank Ambassador Zahir Tanin for his statement.

Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union earlier in this debate.

Last year, Afghanistan successfully held presidential elections, resulting in the first peaceful and democratic transfer of power in the country's often painful history. Those elections eventually led to the formation of a National Unity Government. As the legislative term of the Afghan Parliament ends today, we strongly encourage the Government to continue consolidating Afghan democracy and set a concrete timeline for parliamentary and provincial-council elections to be held in a timely manner.

It is of the utmost importance that the Afghan people have their confidence and trust in democratic election processes restored. The pending electoral reforms have the potential to strengthen the election system's credibility and sustainability. They should be based on a broad political consensus that includes the various political camps as well as civil society. In that context, we welcome the establishment of the Special Commission on Election Reform and urge it to assume its duties as quickly as possible. A fully operational legislative body alongside an efficient National Unity Government is a prerequisite for tackling the many issues facing Afghanistan and for building on the country's numerous achievements of the past decade.

Now is the time to implement the ambitious reform strategy, presented by President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah under the title "Realizing self-reliance", for the benefit of the Afghan people. Refreshing the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework will be the cornerstone of that process. The Government is currently working with its partners to set out new priorities that can put Afghanistan firmly on a path of self-reliance, and that process must continue. One already certain result is that the international community will abide by its commitments and continue to support Afghanistan during its Transformation Decade. At the London Conference on Afghanistan held last December, Germany renewed its commitment to maintaining its extraordinary level of civilian assistance, amounting to almost $500 million annually up to 2016.

The United Nations and its funds and programmes, and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, will continue to play a vital role in the implementation of Afghanistan's policy and development priorities. As the role of the United Nations may evolve over time, we welcome the establishment of the Tripartite Commission, as mandated in resolution 2210 (2015). Any recommendation that can improve the effectiveness of the cooperation between the Afghan Government, the United Nations and donor countries will benefit the Afghan people and is therefore welcome.

The current tragic record level of civilian casualties is of great concern. As the Taliban and other armed groups continue to deliberately target civilians, including women, children and those actively advocating for the rights of these most vulnerable groups, it is the civilian population that pays the price for the armed conflict. Today's attack on the Parliament building, disrupting the confirmation process for the Acting Minister of Defence, is a stark reminder of the Taliban's outrageous actions. Our thoughts are with the victims' families.

In closing, I would like to say that an Afghan-led and -owned peace process that upholds the gains in human rights that have been made over the past decade, in particular the rights of women, is key to alleviating the suffering of the civilian population. We therefore fully support such a peace process and the instrumental role that the United Nations will play in it.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Wilson (Australia): I would also like to thank Special Representative Nicholas Haysom for his briefing and to acknowledge Permanent Representative Zahir Tanin's continuing contribution.

After nine months in office, the National Unity Government has committed to an ambitious reform programme. Its release of the 100-day plans for ministries has shown the global community and the Afghan people the scope of the reform agenda. Australia congratulates Afghanistan and its Government on that initiative and urges them to continue to display determination in carrying out reforms. Since taking over responsibility for providing security for Afghanistan, we note that the Afghan national defence and security forces have demonstrated profound courage, resilience and commitment to the protection of their country and people. But while they are performing strongly against a persistent insurgency, we can also expect the Taliban to continue its campaign of fear. Along with others before us, we condemn today's attack on the Parliament in Kabul and reaffirm our strong support for Afghanistan's legitimate institutions. It is vital that the national forces continue to build their capabilities, particularly in provincial areas, and Australia is providing $300 million between 2015 and 2017 towards that aim.

Among other things, Afghanistan's economy and its Government's finances remain key concerns for Australia. Economic sustainability is key to achieving self-reliance, and we therefore welcome the Afghan Government's focus on improving revenue generation, rationalizing spending and defeating corruption, which must be a major priority. Everything that can be done in that area will not only benefit the Afghan economy, it will also build trust between the Afghan people and the Government.

We see 2015 as the start of a critical decade for Afghan women and girls. We support the National Unity Government's efforts to protect and build on the gains of the past 14 years, which include the enrolment of more than 3 million girls in school and women's increased participation in Afghan political life. Australia also welcomes the recent appointment of four women to ministerial roles and the nomination of the first-ever woman to the Supreme Court. We urge President Ghani Ahmadzai and Chief Executive Abdullah to continue to draw women into political life, which will help not only Afghanistan's women and girls but also the economy and society as a whole.

As others have noted, achieving a political settlement with the Taliban will be necessary if Afghanistan and the region are to find lasting peace. The National Unity Government has made good progress in strengthening its regional relationships, which is a critical first step. We urge Afghanistan and its partners to continue to approach reconciliation with a sense of purpose and pragmatism and to involve Afghan women in pivotal discussions on Afghanistan's future.

A sustainable future for Afghanistan must have strong and sustainable democratic foundations. We continue to urge the Afghan Government to prioritize electoral reform so as to ensure that future elections provide a sound foundation that can enable democracy to mature.

Australia looks forward to continuing its work with the Afghan Government, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and our international partners in order to help the people of Afghanistan deal with the challenges they face in the areas of security, the economy, governance, human rights and human development.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Ms. Samson (Netherlands): The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union. I am grateful to the Secretary-General for his detailed and thorough report (S/2015/422) and would also like to thank Special Representative Haysom for his briefing and Ambassador Tanin for his statement.

The latest report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) describes the sharp increase in armed clashes in a number of provinces resulting from the Taliban's spring offensive. The Kingdom of the Netherlands offers its condolences to the Afghan Government on the lives that have been lost in that offensive and in this morning's attack on the Afghan Parliament in Kabu, a stark reminder of the threat that Afghan civilians face on a daily basis. The Netherlands strongly condemns that heinous assault, which, apart from the devastation and loss of human lives it has brought, is also an attack on the democratic process in Afghanistan.

The Afghan national defence and security forces have been able to push back the insurgents, but Taliban pressure remains high in several provinces. In the long run, lasting stability and peace can be possible only through reconciliation. It is therefore laudable that the National Unity Government has taken the initiative to enter into peace talks with the Taliban. Important first steps have been taken. The Netherlands supports the National Unity Government's regional approach. We also hope to see the meaningful participation of Afghan women in the peace talks. Peace is essential for any further development in Afghanistan.

The National Unity Government presented its ambitious reform agenda, "Realizing self-reliance", during the London Conference. Since then, its appointment of a full Cabinet has progressed slowly but steadily. However, with that now almost complete, we hope to soon be able to see reforms come to fruition.

The Netherlands is looking forward to a draft of the refreshed Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework in the run-up to the senior officials' meeting in Kabul on 5 September. The Framework should include the agreements from the 2012 Tokyo Declaration on Afghanistan, the Government's reform agenda and the various ministries' 100-day action plans.

As the UNAMA report highlights, the National Unity Government is committed to sustainably improving the lives of women in Afghanistan. It has made some significant progress in furthering human rights, including women's rights, since its formation, for example by prohibiting the recruitment of children by the military and police forces and by addressing corruption within the justice sector, as well as through its nomination of the first female Supreme Court judge. Continued commitment is vital. The Netherlands is looking forward to the presentation of the Afghan national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000) and to the 100-day action plan of the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

The Netherlands has been a long-time partner of Afghanistan, with a relationship stretching back more than a decade. We have been contributing in the area of security in the provinces of Baghlan, Uruzgan and Kunduz, and currently in Balkh province. Since 2002, Afghanistan has been one of our most important partners in development cooperation, particularly in the areas of the rule of law, reconstruction and gender. We have been a trusted contributor to the World Bank's Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, supporting Afghan economic development, education, health care and governmental capacities. The Netherlands also contributes troops to NATO's Resolute Support Mission for training, advising and assisting in northern Afghanistan and Mazar-e-Sharif. We have sent staff to the European Union Police Mission training effort and to UNAMA, and we will continue to support the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police.

As our Minister for Foreign Affairs said at the London Conference, the Netherlands will stand by the Afghan people in the years to come. Our continued support must go hand in hand with critical and meaningful reforms within the Afghan Government, as agreed on in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, so that self-reliance can indeed be achieved in this new era of increased Afghan ownership and leadership.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to underline the continued support of the Netherlands for the role played by UNAMA, and to thank it for its ongoing constructive role in coordinating the international community's efforts and fulfilling its political mandate.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to express my appreciation to you, Madam President, for holding this debate on the situation in Afghanistan. I would also like to thank Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), for his briefing.

I offer my condolences to the people and Government of Afghanistan for the losses they have incurred in the terrorist attacks carried out by the Taliban against them, including the attack on Parliament that took place earlier today.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always supported peace, stability, security and socioeconomic development in Afghanistan and considers that country's security tantamount to security within its own borders. Our policy of steadfast support for the Afghan Government has not changed, and will not. We are confident that the National Unity Government is best positioned to face the major challenges to peace and development in Afghanistan, and in that regard we will spare no effort in lending it our support.

Once again, unfortunately, the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2015/422) indicates a deterioration in the country's security situation, describing an increase in armed attacks and violence that is 6 per cent higher than in the same period in 2014 and 45 per cent higher than in 2013. Those figures should be a matter of grave concern to all of us in the region and beyond. Insecurity, instability and poverty continue to provide fertile ground for the continued presence in Afghanistan of violent extremist groups such as the Taliban and Al-Qaida, as well as of the more recently emerged Daesh and other foreign terrorist fighters, as the Secretary-General mentions in the report.

Unfortunately, the report also indicates that the number of terrorist actions has increased. We regard activities by all violent extremists in Afghanistan as a security threat to Iran and the whole region. Iran has always condemned all violent attacks committed by terrorist groups, and we reject any cooperation with them, since we believe that would be counterproductive in establishing peace in Afghanistan.

On bilateral cooperation, Iran hosted President Ghani on 19 and 20 April for his first official visit to Iran and meetings with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani, during which the two countries pledged greater cooperation in the areas of security information-sharing, counter-narcotics operations, the sharing of water resources, and refugees. The two presidents also underlined their determination to cooperate in fighting extremism and terrorism throughout the region by eliminating those menaces.

In the view of the Iranian Government, trade and transit are two main fields that are ripe for expansion in Tehran-Kabul relations. The railroad project between Herat and the city of Khaf in Iran and Iran's readiness to make its port facilities in Chahbahar available to Afghanistan are two major and ongoing projects in that field. As Afghanistan is a landlocked country, it is agreed that those two projects are very important. We need to move forward with those activities in the framework of the tripartite agreement between India, Afghanistan and Iran as soon as possible.

On counter-narcotics efforts, we are particularly concerned about the reports indicating an increase in opium-poppy cultivation in Afghanistan during recent years. It is a real warning sign for the region and beyond. That threat should be addressed by the international community in a very serious manner. In that regard, we welcome the regional initiatives taken by the countries of the region, including China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Iran, to combat the production and transfer of narcotics. At the same time, strong support and commitment by the international donors, Afghan authorities and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is essential in order to deter the menace of drug cultivation and drug trafficking. Illicit drugs are not only a major social and public-health challenge, but also, and more importantly, a main source of income for extremist and terrorist groups. Therefore, the international community should provide special support to the triangular cooperation initiative on countering narcotics agreed by Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. That is a useful initiative that will benefit Afghanistan as well as transit and destination countries.

Afghan refugees continue to live in Iran. Voluntary repatriations of Afghan refugees and undocumented Afghans must be supported through efforts to meet the reasonable needs of repatriated and repatriating refugees in Afghanistan, with a view to enabling them to be permanently reintegrated into their home country. That underscores the need to mobilize more international support to ensure the success of repatriation efforts.

We support UNAMA and United Nations agencies in their efforts to providing development and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan through robust regional engagement. UNAMA should be further strengthened, given its unique role and multifaceted functions vis-à-vis the important political and socioeconomic challenges facing Afghanistan.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Grant (Canada): Today we awoke to news of the Afghan Parliament, the seat of Afghan democracy, being under assault by gunmen. Those terrorists killed Afghan civilians but were denied the ability to murder Afghan legislators thanks to the brave efforts of Afghan security forces. On this day, when Afghanistan was to confirm its newest Defence Minister through its own elected Parliament, the militants continued to wage their war against the Afghan people. Yet they were not alone.

They came from somewhere. They were sheltered, trained, sponsored and deployed. In the face of such violence, Canada continues to stand with the Afghan people, the vast majority of whom choose modernity and progress and reject terrorism and corruption.

With the appointment of a full Cabinet, save for one minister, the formation of the Afghan National Unity Government of President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah is almost complete. Attention can now turn to securing Afghanistan's stability and sustainability. We understand the complexities of working within the national unity structure, but a Government must govern and provide basic services to its citizenry within its territory. While many issues must wait for security conditions to improve, others can and should be addressed without delay. Central to that, we encourage the President and the Chief Executive to work together and ensure effective implementation of vital reforms aimed at eradicating corruption, improving governance, reducing poverty, strengthening the economy, protecting human rights — especially the rights of women and girls — and improving participation in politics and society, particularly as they concern women and minority groups.

We also urge the National Unity Government to embark on meaningful electoral reform in order to restore the people's faith in democracy and representational government. The absence of reform is what has caused the delay in the parliamentary elections. We welcome the fact that the term length for the lower house of Parliament will be prolonged so as to maintain its legitimacy and constitutionality.

(*spoke in French*)

Canada is encouraged by certain signals that the anti-corruption efforts of the Afghan Government are beginning to take hold. The 26 April report of the Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee demonstrates that progress is being made in response to 323 recommendations. Indeed, 53 recommendations have already been implemented, and work has started on 149 others. We encourage further work in that area, as it will assist the international community in remaining engaged in Afghanistan.

The law on the elimination of violence against women was first enacted in 2009, but it is clear that it falls short of providing the intended protections and assistance to Afghan women and girls. The April 2015 report by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights entitled "Justice through the Eyes of Women" demonstrates that much work still remains to be done in order to implement that law fully. Once final, and with the full political will of the Afghan Government, the national action plan for women and peace and security will become another key piece that will require full and effective implementation.

The rule of law and accountability must be applied in Afghanistan. The Government can choose no better goal than to focus on protecting the human rights of the most vulnerable in the country. Afghan women and girls must feel safe in their homes and empowered to participate fully in their communities. That is especially true when their rights are violated by Afghan security forces, Government-affiliated militias or Government officials.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada remains committed to Afghanistan. We are contributing $330 million over three years, starting in 2015, to help sustain the Afghan National Security Forces in order to further the aims of stability and security. Afghanistan remains a country of focus for Canada's international development efforts. Between 2014 and 2017, our $227 million investment in the future of Afghanistan will consolidate and expand the gains made in maternal, newborn and child health, assist in providing access to high-quality basic education for children and youth and embolden women's civil and political participation, human rights and economic empowerment. It will also provide much-needed support for mine-action activities and for efforts to help Afghan actors better manage natural and man-made disasters.

We have expressed confidence in the Government's reform agenda by investing $20 million towards its fiscal gap in 2014, of which $10 million were new funds and $10 million had been re-profiled from the World Bank's Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. We appreciate the resolve and leadership taken by the National Unity Government, in line with aid-effectiveness principles, to prioritize a significant number of short-term reforms. Canada looks forward to refreshing the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, based on the reform programme and the priorities of the National Unity Government announced at the London Conference on Afghanistan in December 2014.

(*spoke in French*)

Canada also welcomed, on 1 January, the start of the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission and endorsed the principles of NATO's enhanced Enduring Partnership with Afghanistan aimed at extending our cooperation further during Afghanistan's Transformation Decade.

I must note, on behalf of Foreign Minister Nicholson and the Government of Canada, the crucial need to put an end to violations of Afghanistan's sovereignty and to the interference by foreign armed groups — directly or through proxies, including through the support of terrorist groups such as the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, Al-Qaida or Daesh. It is foolish to claim that the material support for those subversive elements could ever be justified as a matter of legitimate policy. Ultimately, in Afghanistan, it is the Afghans who are paying the ultimate price for that folly.

In the last year we have witnessed the tragic consequences that occur when a country, operating behind a thin and flimsy smokescreen of denial, flouts international law and interferes in the sovereignty of another to annex territory and foment instability. The safeguarding of Afghanistan's sovereignty is no less important.

(*spoke in English*)

Without rules, chaos will ensue. Without a repudiation of the worst practices in foreign policy, instability will prevail. Absent an end to interference and violations of sovereignty, the economies of Afghanistan and the region will remain shackled to their self-perpetuating poverty.

(*spoke in French*)

India's Prime Minister noted during his statement to the General Assembly (see A/69/PV.15) that there was no difference between "good terror" and "bad terror". Indeed, there is no place in the civilized world for resorting to terror as a political tool and no cause that justifies terror as a legitimate means. The promotion of terror, which is encouraged by some States or that is deeply rooted there, is a betrayal of our international order. The centres in Quetta, Peshawar and Chitral where terrorist elements plan, train and deploy terrorist attacks in Afghanistan cannot continue to be tolerated.

With regard to the region, the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan must stop using terror for questionable purposes. We must confront the threat of terrorism and all its accomplices. Indeed, the countries that support those groups are not friends of Afghanistan, of the Afghan people or of those who have gathered in this Chamber today to renew their efforts to enable the Afghan people to experience freedom and prosperity.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada echoes UNAMA's observation that Afghans desperately want respite from the ever-present violence that has such a damaging impact on their lives. The Government of Afghanistan has committed itself to achieving peace. We are encouraged by the steps that the Afghan National Unity Government has taken to include women in the peace process.

Terrorists can no longer claim to be fighting foreigners in Afghanistan — instead they are fighting and murdering Afghans and innocent civilians, like those at the Afghan Parliament today. They are the main victims of this conflict. The Taliban and its sponsors must cease their armed opposition and join the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process without further delay.

Canadians from all walks of life continue to support Afghans in their aspiration for peace and security. Canada takes this opportunity to assure the United Nations that we will work with the Afghan National Unity Government and the international community to face the numerous challenges that continue to beset Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations

S/PV.7468

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7468th meeting

Tuesday, 23 June 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ibrahim	(Malaysia)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Ms. Sapag Muñoz de la Peña
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2015/426)

Letter dated 16 June 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/444)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2015/426)

Letter dated 16 June 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/444)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Diop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Mongi Hamdi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/426, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali. I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/444, which contains a letter dated 16 June 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Hamdi.

Mr. Hamdi (*spoke in French*): It is an honour for me to address the Security Council in my capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of Mission of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization in Mali (MINUSMA). The report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2015/426), which the Council has before it, follows resolution 2100 (2013) of 25 April 2013, which established MINUSMA.

As the Security Council discusses renewing the mandate of MINUSMA, I will also take this opportunity to take stock of the challenges facing the Mission and short- and medium-term perspectives.

Last Saturday, 20 June, we attended the final stage of the signing of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. It was a great day of peace for Mali, a historic day. Today we have a global and inclusive agreement, that is to say, signed by all parties to the conflict: the Government, the Azawad movements Coordination and the Platform coalition. The Agreement was negotiated in less than a year, with the support of international mediation efforts led by Algeria. It is a political, institutional, security, humanitarian and development compromise that will enable Malians to rebuild their nation on strong foundations.

Of course, the Agreement is not peace itself, as peace cannot be decreed, but it establishes the conditions for building peace and lays out the best way to get there. Of course, the Agreement is not itself reconciliation among the various communities of Mali, but it provides a foundation on which to rebuild Mali. Of course, the challenges ahead are many, because rebuilding is more difficult than destroying. However, I am convinced of the goodwill of the majority of women, men and youth from all regions of Mali, with whom I speak on a daily basis.

Throughout the negotiation process, we have consistently reminded the parties to the conflict and the Malian people of the special nature of this new agreement as compared with previous ones. We have stressed, among other things, the involvement of the international community, either through the presence of a United Nations mission or in mediation during negotiations, but also in the implementation of the Agreement.

Concretely, the people of Mali, particularly those of the northern regions, ask for only one thing: security and the return of basic social services, especially health and education. To get there, a real, ongoing and animated dialogue must be established among Malians, one inspired by a spirit of compromise and founded on trust and mutual respect. In that respect, I welcome the Government's inclusion of the Peace Agreement in its general policy programme, which was presented two weeks ago to the National Assembly.

The weeks and months ahead will be critical. It is imperative to begin to take concrete action so that the Malian people can begin to see and feel the dividends of peace. With that, I launch a strong appeal to the international community and financial institutions regarding the need to begin funding the implementation of the Peace Agreement as soon as possible.

(*spoke in English*)

In spite of notable progress on the political front, the security situation remains fragile. The recent violations of the ceasefire agreements and the clashes are a stark reminder of the complexity and unpredictability of the security environment in the northern regions of Mali. I welcome the withdrawal of the Platform from Ménaka, where the Mission continues to reinforce its presence and support arrangements to ensure the protection of civilians.

The security provisions in the Peace Agreement, if implemented in a timely, inclusive and consensual fashion by the parties, could have a positive impact on our efforts to stabilize the northern regions. They include interim security arrangements, including cantonment, as well as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security-sector reform programmes. MINUSMA and the United Nations family are expected to play a major role in those areas. The success of our combined efforts is contingent on the parties' commitment and determination to make much-needed compromises and concessions for the greater good of all Malians. The continued maintenance of the ceasefires is an important demonstration of that.

The recent spate of violence in some localities in the north has caused massive displacements of populations. That increased caseload puts an even heavier burden on the resources of host families, health and education facilities, and on water and sanitation infrastructures. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the humanitarian community in Mali, including United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, on their mobilization and quick response to address the displacement crisis.

The Peace Agreement opens prospects for Mali's recovery and long-term perspectives, with a view to reversing the setbacks induced by the political and security crisis. Scores of displaced people and refugees are returning home in spite of pressing humanitarian needs. It is therefore crucial to quickly re-establish basic social services nationwide, particularly in areas of return. That will facilitate the reintegration of people within their communities, ease potential tensions over meagre resources, guide early-recovery activities and support social cohesion.

Northern Mali remains one of the most difficult environments for peacekeeping. Its size, geographical environment, harsh climate and extremely poor or non-existent infrastructure continue to pose significant challenges to the Mission. To compound the situation, violent extremists and other enemies of peace continue to indiscriminately attack our forces and camps. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my condolences to the families and Governments of the fallen peacekeepers. I would also like to express my gratitude to all the countries contributing troops and police forces to MINUSMA and salute their courage.

We are likely to continue to face significant security and operational challenges in the immediate future despite the Peace Agreement. It is therefore critical that troop- and police-contributing countries have the capacities and capabilities required to operate safely and effectively in such an environment.

As the Security Council initiates discussions on MINUSMA's mandate renewal, neither the challenges nor the risks at hand should be underestimated. Nevertheless, our efforts to date and the results achieved thus far suggest that, with commitment, vision and adequate resources, those challenges are not insurmountable.

Going forward, it is critical to clearly define the roles of the international community in the implementation of the Agreement, based on comparative advantages. MINUSMA, by virtue of its mandate, and working together with partners, will naturally play a lead role in supporting the implementation of the Agreement on the ground. I see a particularly important role for MINUSMA in supporting security and defence, as well as the human rights and justice aspects of the Agreement. MINUSMA will also provide support to the functioning of the Comité de suivi de l'accord by leading its secretariat.

Mali has made significant strides in the last three years, thanks to a combination of national and international efforts. I would like to salute the Malian Government, the armed movements and the population for their courage and determination to peacefully resolve their differences. I would like to express my gratitude to all members of the mediation team, particularly Algeria, for its commitment and dedication throughout the negotiations process. And I would like to thank France and the United States for their unwavering support to Mali and to the Mission.

In conclusion, the Peace Agreement provides an opportunity to start addressing the multifaceted challenges facing Mali. The responsibility for the implementation of the Agreement lies primarily with the Malians themselves, with the support of MINUSMA and the international community. It is my hope that the future mandate of MINUSMA can be oriented fully behind the peace process, including through continued good offices, active ceasefire monitoring and a leading role in the implementation of the Agreement.

The President: I thank Mr. Hamdi for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Diop.

Mr. Diop: Allow me to express our warmest congratulations to the delegation of Malaysia on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June. By the same token, I would like to commend the delegation of Lithuania for the manner in which it conducted the work of the Council during the previous month.

(*spoke in French*)

I would like once again to express the deep gratitude of His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President of the Republic of Mali, and that of the Government and people of Mali to our common Organization, the United Nations, and to Member States for their multifaceted and steady support of the peace process in Mali since January 2012. In a similar vein, I would like to reaffirm the confidence of the Government of Mali in the international mediation led by Algeria, which included the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation and neighbouring nations such as Burkina Faso, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria and Chad.

I would like to particularly thank France for its role and decisive contribution in Mali and all its sacrifices. I also commend the United States of America for the decisive role it has played in helping to restore peace and stability in our country. I also take this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his personal commitment to peace and reconciliation in Mali, but also to stability in the Sahel region in general.

I extend the heartfelt thanks of the Malian people to all friendly nations and international partner organizations that have shown their solidarity with Mali by sending their children, and often their experts, to defend the values underlying our humanity. I pay solemn tribute to the memory of all victims — civilians and soldiers, Malians and foreigners — who fell on the field of honour in Mali in defence of human dignity, freedom and democracy.

I reassert the active solidarity of the Government and people of Mali with the Governments and people of the Niger, Chad and Kenya, following the recent terrorist attacks, which caused a high number of casualties, particularly among the civilian population.

The Government of Mali has taken note of the Secretary-General's report on the evolution of the situation in Mali (S/2015/426) and would like to thank our friend Mr. Mongi Hamdi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), for his briefing. At the outset, I would like to note that the report should be updated, because it fails to mention the recent positive developments, including in relation to the peace process, that have taken place since 15 May.

I am particularly gratified to be meeting with the Security Council this morning, at this juncture when the peace and reconciliation process in Mali has made significant progress in the right direction, as evidenced by the finalization of the Bamako Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Indeed, following the signature on 15 May of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which came from the Algiers process, by the Government of Mali, the Platform coalition and members of the Coordination coalition, we welcome the signature of the Agreement on 20 June in Bamako by the other members of the Coordination that had not previously signed. Mali now has a consensual peace agreement that will serve as the general framework for the sustainable resolution of all dimensions of the most serious crisis in our country's history. This Agreement will set the seal once and for all on reconciliation among Malians.

The Bamako Agreement constitutes a balanced compromise that takes into account the legitimate concerns of all the parties while respecting the unity and territorial integrity of Mali and the secular and republican character of the State. It also establishes the conditions for long-term stability, because the reconciled Malian nation will effectively and relentlessly combat terrorism, drug trafficking and other criminal networks, particularly in the area of irregular migration.

The signature of the Agreement by all the Malian parties, however, is not enough in itself. The greatest difficulty at the moment remains the effective and full implementation of the provisions of this valuable and, I must emphasize, historic instrument. For its part, the Government of Mali, under the authority of the President of the Republic, Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, once again reaffirms its steadfast determination to honour all its commitments under the Agreement. We expect the same of the other Malian parties, whose good faith and commitment in the matter we do not doubt. We also call upon the international community to honour its commitments and to continue its support for thorough and full implementation of the Agreement.

As Council members will remember, on 25 June 2014, the Security Council adopted resolution 2164 (2014), extending the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, or MINUSMA. As the Council once again prepares to extend that mandate, I would like to emphasize that the Mission's future mandate should take into account the positive developments in the Malian peace process. In that regard, the Government would like the future mandate of MINUSMA to be based essentially on the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, as highlighted a moment ago by the Secretary-General's Special Representative.

In our view, therefore, MINUSMA should support the following: political dialogue and national reconciliation; the Government's efforts in the area of security, stabilization and the protection of civilian populations; the re-establishment of the State's authority throughout the country; the reconstruction of the Malian security sector; the promotion and upholding of human rights; and humanitarian aid. Specifically, and in view of the lessons learned in recent times, the Government of Mali requests the members of the Security Council to take into account certain priorities in the future mandate of MINUSMA.

First, with regard to support for the political process designed to resolve the crisis and ensure reconciliation in Mali, the Government invites the Security Council to give MINUSMA a mandate to help the Malian authorities and all the Malian parties to effectively and fully implement the Agreement. Particularly important are the continuation of the good-offices missions of MINUSMA, intended to anticipate, prevent, mitigate and resolve conflicts; support for the Comité de suivi, led by Algeria, and for the central role that the Government of Mali will play in the implementation of the Agreement; enhancement of cooperation between MINUSMA and the Malian authorities — a point on which I would place particular emphasis; and the re-establishment of confidence between MINUSMA and the people of Mali, who are in no way hostile to the force's intervention in the country; quite the contrary. In addition, the human, material and financial resources of MINUSMA should be strengthened to meet the challenges of security, early recovery and development in the implementation of the mandate of this important tool.

The Malian Government's second priority is security, stabilization and the protection of civilians. It calls on the Security Council to once again authorize MINUSMA to help the Malian authorities to stabilize the main urban areas, in particular in the country's northern regions, remove threats and take steps to prevent the return of armed elements to those areas. The Council should also renew its authorization for MINUSMA to support the Malian authorities so as to coordinate the international efforts to canton the armed groups; develop and implement the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme for former combatants; and dismantle such groups. The Council should also renew its authorization for MINUSMA to protect civilians imminently threatened with physical violence, in particular women and children threatened by conflict, especially those who are victims of sexual violence.

To that end, MINUSMA must be invited to expand its presence in the north of the country, particularly in areas where civilians are in danger; support the implementation of the ceasefire and confidence-building measures on the ground; and enhance its operational coordination with the Malian defence and security forces. The DDR programme, which is important to the implementation of the Agreement, must be taken in hand, and all combatants from armed groups who do not join the defence and security forces must be able to benefit from socioeconomic rehabilitation programmes.

We feel that the Council should demand in particular that the battalions needed for the establishment of the MINUSMA rapid deployment force be made operational, something that has not yet happened even though the force was envisaged in resolution 2164 (2014).

Secondly, the mechanisms for observing the ceasefire and implementing the Agreement should also become operational. Next, we will not cease demanding that resources needed to provide MINUSMA with surge capability be made available. Then the use of every available means of preventing and avoiding the threat and return of terrorist groups, drug traffickers and other forces hostile to the implementation of the Agreement — including, I would reiterate, the establishment of a regional rapid deployment force, as recently advocated by ECOWAS, the African Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation — must be authorized. The Security Council should also demand that the armed groups that signed the Agreement be clearly distinguished from terrorist groups, drug traffickers and other hostile forces.

The third priority for the Government of Mali is support for the re-establishment of the State's authority throughout the country, for the reconstruction of the Malian security sector, for the promotion and upholding of human rights and for humanitarian aid. The Government would like the new mandate of MINUSMA to take the following into account.

First and as a matter of absolute priority is support for the re-establishment of the State's authority, the reconstruction of the security sector and the provision of basic social services. Such support will be an initial test of the commitment and credibility of all parties to the Agreement. The Special Representative referred just now to the fact that the people are demanding the restoration of basic social services. That is absolutely true, but above all they are specifically demanding the restoration of the Malian State, which will enable us to create the conditions necessary for restoring the administration, restoring basic social services and creating a minimum level of security. Here I should also stress the importance of assisting the Malian authorities with training and other forms of support for demining and the destruction of improvised explosive devices.

Another issue is ensuring the security of humanitarian convoys, including by opening humanitarian corridors and implementing an emergency humanitarian package. I would like to emphasize that last issue, setting up the emergency humanitarian package. This is not a new problem. During the negotiation process the Government party put on the table the need for all sides to agree on a minimum humanitarian action package that would make it possible to ease the people's suffering. Unfortunately, that idea did not receive the hoped-for support, but now that the Agreement has been signed, it is one of the top priority tasks we should tackle with the help of the United Nations, and particularly the agencies within whose purview it falls, along with the assistance of our financial partners.

Next is combating terrorism and trafficking of every kind within the framework of cooperation between, on the one hand, Operation Barkhane and the Malian armed forces, and, on the other, between MINUSMA and the Malian armed forces and security forces. And of course all three should be able to work together, with the Malian forces in the centre.

Then comes support for the national authorities in combating organized crime, especially drug trafficking. In our view, that particular point should be one of the innovations in the new resolution. It is true that one can create a framework for countering terrorism with the help of the Barkhane force. Organized crime, particularly drug trafficking, is the source fuelling the conflict, and as long as we do not deal properly with the issue — which the Agreement does not address sufficiently — we will never reach a definitive solution to the crisis, because drugs are feeding every party to this conflict. Thus I believe it is absolutely essential, with the help of the United Nations and every partner involved, that we launch a strong initiative to fight drug trafficking.

Next is support in organizing and securitizing elections, particularly those relating to the country's territorial and political reorganization through the regionalization process, as well as in our work on structural projects designed to benefit the people and areas affected by the crisis.

Following the decisions taken by ECOWAS and the African Union at their respective summits, which took place on 17 and 18 May in Accra and 14 and 15 June in Johannesburg, the Government of Mali would like to urge the Security Council in its turn to ensure that it is the Malian armed forces alone that have the right and the legitimacy to occupy any area of their national territory as part of their sovereign mission to secure the country's borders, its people and their property. Any other occupation by irregular forces is therefore illegal and should end, and the Agreement should support that.

Furthermore, in his current report, the Secretary-General recommends the deployment of 40 military observers. The Government takes note of the recommendation but asks that posts be created for liaison officers to work with the Malian armed forces and security forces so that the deficiencies in collaboration and cooperation between our forces and those of the United Nations can be remedied.

Here I hope I may comment on the proposal to deploy 40 military observers, since we believe it important that the Secretariat clarify the concept and indicate more specifically how those additional elements will work with those already in place, including both the Mixed Technical Commission on Security and the mobile observation units — how they will work together and what will be the role of the Government in relation to the observations they will perform. We are totally willing to continue our dialogue with our friends in the United Nations and the Secretariat on the issue, and we think it should enable us to move forward.

The Government of Mali is also very concerned about the development of terrorist activities and drug trafficking in the region. I note that the report addresses those major concerns only fleetingly, and I was surprised to see that in fact terrorism is not mentioned anywhere in the report. That is a serious question. What has changed in our vocabulary? We know how high a price the Mission itself has paid, with about 50 troops killed, basically owing to terrorism. We have all been asking why terrorism is not mentioned as such in the Secretary-General's report.

In order to defend against that threat, the Government of Mali calls on the Security Council to thoroughly consider the possibility of authorizing the deployment of a regional rapid reaction force put together by the countries of the region. I realize that at the moment there is no great enthusiasm for the idea, but I would like to explain. I think we should take a longer view. The African Union has been tasked with looking further into that option and approaching the United Nations and Operation Barkhane regarding their support.

The basic aim of such an initiative is not to replace operations already under way — we particularly welcome Barkhane's lifesaving action in the fight against terrorism — but we also know that it is important to create capacity within a country such as Mali, like our neighbours Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, the Niger and Chad, a capacity enabling us to fight these threats over the long term. As we know, terrorism has no sell-by date. This is a fight that will continue, and our countries need help in developing their own capacities. On the way, we will have to depend on the capacities that are already there, but it is absolutely critical for us that we not be denied the opportunity to consider how to set up a regional intervention force. If we find something better, so much the better, but the important thing is that we start to create a regional and national capacity for countering terrorism, because it is our soldiers, not just those from foreign countries, who must put their lives on the line for that cause. We are ready to make those sacrifices for what we asking for, but we ask that our units be adequately trained and equipped to be able to enter that fight.

I would like to end as I began, by once again emphasizing that the peace process in Mali has made major, real and significant progress towards the achievement of national reconciliation and the harmonious development of the country as a whole, so that there is a place in it for every one of its sons and daughters. They are all Malians, and they all have the right to live in dignity in their own country and to participate in the political and social life of Mali.

The implementation phase that is beginning will therefore be the most important step of all. While it will unquestionably be a difficult and complicated one, we at least have the good fortune of possessing a road map, because we have the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, which sets out what the next steps must be. Speaking for the Government of Mali, I would once again like to reiterate its determination to honour all of its commitments and to work inclusively with all the Malian participants to ensure a Malian-owned process, one including members of civil society, who are also asking for the right to be at that table to contribute to the restoration of peace and reconciliation in our country.

In the next few days, the Government will establish a national mechanism responsible for implementing the Agreement. The international monitoring committee provided for in the Agreement, which was established in Bamako on 20 June on the margins of the signing ceremony, is ready to begin. In that regard, we expect, we hope and we demand that MINUSMA will play an important role.

We think that the national mechanism should assume the lead in the implementation of the Agreement. It can serve as liaison to the international Comité de suivi provided for in the Agreement and as the instrument of national ownership of the process of implementation by Malian men and women. The Government will make available all the human and material resources required to act in that regard.

Before concluding, I would like to call on the international community to continue its support and to honour its commitments for the effective and comprehensive implementation of the Bamako Agreement and a guarantee of lasting stability in Mali and in the region. I have no doubt that the Security Council will play its full part in that regard.

The President: I thank Mr. Diop for his statement.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7469

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7469th meeting

Tuesday, 23 June 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Adnin	(Malaysia)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gimolieca
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Olguín Cigarroa
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Stehelin
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Mr. Baublys
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Nigeria	Mr. Adejola
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Non-proliferation

Briefing by the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Non-proliferation

Briefing by the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006)

The President: At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Ambassador Román Oyarzun Marchesi, Permanent Representative of Spain, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006).

I now give the floor to Ambassador Oyarzun Marchesi.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to present the report of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006), in accordance with paragraph 18 of that resolution. The present report covers the period from 24 March to 22 June, during which time the Committee held an informal meeting on 1 June and carried out additional activities, using the no-objection procedure provided for in paragraph 15 of the guidelines for conducting its work.

Taking into account the evolution of events relating to the Joint Plan of Action, the Committee reiterates its support to all parties in their efforts to hold negotiations aimed at achieving a broad agreement.

I would like to reiterate that the measures imposed by the Security Council under resolutions 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008) and 1929 (2010) remain in full effect while negotiations between the P5+1 and the Islamic Republic of Iran continue, and that Member States remain under the obligation to apply them. The Committee continues to fully support the implementation of all relevant resolutions and stands ready to provide guidance to those Member States that request assistance.

During the reporting period, the Committee was informed of no new incidents. With respect to prior events investigated by the Panel of Experts, I would like to recall that the Committee has been in touch with the Islamic Republic of Iran on a number of occasions in order to convey its observations. The Islamic Republic of Iran has not yet responded, and the Committee continues to urge it to do so.

The Committee continues to provide States and international organizations with assistance in implementing the relevant Security Council measures. That includes analysing whether or not the proposals for technical assistance to the Islamic Republic of Iran, which cover a broad array of fields, from energy efficiency to the protection of the ozone layer, as well as proposals for other kinds of cooperation, are in violation of the sanctions regimes. The Committee welcomes such collaboration on matters relating to implementation and compliance, and encourages the parties to continue to request the Committee's guidance with respect to the implementation of the Council's measures.

In accordance with paragraph 5 of resolution 1737 (2006), the Committee was notified by one Member State about the expected delivery of equipment to be used in a light-water reactor at the Bushehr nuclear plant. Regarding actions taken by Member States to implement the relevant measures of the Security Council, the Committee encourages those Member States that have not yet submitted reports to do so as soon as possible, in recognition of the importance of national implementation reports for promoting the implementation of sanctions measures.

With regard to the Panel of Experts, the Committee heard a briefing on the final report on the mandate of the Panel of Experts (S/2015/401) in the framework of its informal consultations, which were held on 1 June, and had the opportunity to review that report with the Panel, as required in paragraph 2 of resolution 2159 (2014). On 1 June the Council received the report, the text of which may be viewed in all the official languages of the United Nations. The report contains observations that can serve as a useful guide for Member States when it comes time to implement the measures set forth in resolutions 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008) and 1929 (2010). The Committee notes that the Panel has not issued any new recommendations in addition to those contained in its previous final reports. The Committee will continue to study the report and to consider whether additional follow-up measures will be needed in the light of its conclusions.

Furthermore, I would like to state that, following the 9 June decision adopted by the Council in resolution

2224 (2015) to extend the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 9 July 2016, the Bureau has undertaken the required administrative procedures concerning nominations to the Panel. With respect to the activities conducted by the Panel over the past three months, I wish to point out that it participated in a series of activities that are enumerated in the annex to the current report.

Finally, while the Committee reiterates that the primary responsibility for applying the provisions of resolutions 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008) and 1929 (2010) resides with Member States, the Committee is prepared to facilitate the implementation of those measures.

The President: I thank Ambassador Oyarzun Marchesi for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I thank the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006) and its Chair, as well as the Panel of Experts, for their continued work in supporting implementation of the Council's resolutions on Iran.

This briefing comes at a crucial moment for Iran. Negotiations between Iran and the E3+3 on a comprehensive agreement on Iran's nuclear programme will reach their conclusion in the coming days. We hope that a deal can be reached by the deadline on next Tuesday. The E3+3 and Iran agreed on the key parameters for a comprehensive agreement in Lausanne on 2 April. That was a major milestone and formed the basis for what could be a very good deal — one that is durable and verifiable and will, if fully implemented, address our proliferation concerns.

There is, however, much to be done in very little time. Important political and technical issues still need to be resolved before we have a final agreement. Diplomats and technical experts from the E3+3 and Iran are currently meeting in an effort to finalize a comprehensive agreement by 30 June. In parallel to those negotiations, the E3+3 and Iran have been implementing their commitments under the Joint Plan of Action. I thank my fellow E3+3 members for their support in that effort.

But as this report reminds us, while negotiations continue, the bulk of sanctions remain in place and must continue to be enforced in full. That includes all United Nations sanctions and all obligations on Member States arising from Council resolutions on the issue. The lifting of sanctions should act as an incentive for Iran to conclude the negotiations on a comprehensive agreement.

Turning to the work of the Committee, I am grateful for the crucial role that it plays in supporting the enforcement of the relevant Council sanctions measures on Iran. We also welcome the ongoing work of the Panel of Experts and the Council's decision to extend the Panel's mandate until 9 July 2016.

We support the Committee's continued guidance and assistance to Member States and international organizations. But we are disappointed at Iran's continued failure to respond to past requests from the Committee for information on various incidents of concern. Once again, we urge Iran to engage constructively with the Committee on those requests.

The United Kingdom remains committed to finding a peaceful and lasting negotiated solution to the Iran nuclear issue. A negotiated settlement with Iran that is durable and verifiable and that addresses our proliferation concerns is the best way to stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability.

A comprehensive deal with Iran is in all our interests. For the international community it would provide reassurance that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes at a time of great instability in the region. For Iran, it would mean, ultimately, the lifting of all sanctions imposed as a result of Iran's nuclear programme. This would have a huge impact on Iran's economy and would improve the day-to-day lives of ordinary Iranians over time. Furthermore, it would present a real opportunity to reset relationships with the international community.

Should it fail to seize this opportunity, Iran faces further years in isolation, to the detriment of its people, its economy and its standing in the region. We hope that will not be the case.

In order to help secure a better future for Iran, we will continue to make every effort to find a comprehensive agreement. We look to Iran to do the same.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I thank Ambassador Oyarzun for his briefing.

We may be entering a critical moment in the Security Council's consideration of the Iranian nuclear issue. For almost nine years, the Security Council has acted in response to concerns about the nature of Iran's nuclear programme. By applying progressively stronger sanctions, the Council has supported international nuclear diplomacy and has helped bring us closer to resolving this difficult issue through negotiations.

As we meet today, negotiators from Iran and the P5+1 countries are meeting in Vienna to finalize a comprehensive nuclear deal. That work is hard, and success is not guaranteed. This past spring, we made great progress in Lausanne, Switzerland, by agreeing to the parameters of a nuclear deal, but there is still much work to be done. We still need to flesh out important details and resolve some challenging issues where there is still disagreement. Until there is a deal, the Security Council must continue to stand behind its previous resolutions on the Iranian nuclear issue. The sanctions that the Council has imposed remain in force. Member States must continue to implement them fully, as required by Council resolutions.

Additionally, the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006), with the support of the Panel of Experts, should continue efforts to improve sanctions enforcement and provide useful advice to Member States on questions involving sanctions implementation. If Member States are able to share with the Committee or the Panel evidence of sanctions violations, then we encourage them to do so at any time, even during this period of negotiations.

We were troubled to read in the Panel's recent report of continuing violations of the United Nations sanctions, such as those related to conventional arms and illicit nuclear procurement. Iran's trafficking in weapons, including shipments to some of the most extreme and irresponsible actors in its region, remains a serious threat to peace. In addition to violating Security Council resolutions, smuggling of that kind supports terrorism, fuels Al-Assad's violence in Syria and further destabilizes Yemen. The United States, working closely with partners, will continue to help detect, disrupt and seize such shipments.

As we announced in Lausanne, if a deal is reached, then the Security Council would be asked to adopt a new resolution to endorse it. That resolution would also terminate the provisions of previous sanctions resolutions upon verification that Iran has taken certain nuclear steps. It would also establish ongoing restrictions. If such a resolution were to be adopted, the United Nations would continue to help ensure that Member States understand their precise obligations in the period ahead. If there is not a deal, however, then, needless to say, the work of the Committee and Panel will become even more critical.

For now, however, we look with hope to Vienna. I think I speak for all Council colleagues when I wish our negotiators the best of luck in their endeavour.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ambassador Oyarzun Marchesi of Spain for his briefing and appreciate the efforts made by the Ambassador and his team to promote the work of the Committee.

China has always attached importance to and taken an active part in the Committee's work and hopes that the Committee will continue to carry out its mandate in a balanced and practical manner. China is of the view that all parties have the obligation to implement the Security Council's resolutions on sanctions against Iran in an earnest, accurate and comprehensive manner. However, the sanctions themselves are not the purpose of the Security Council resolutions. The activities of the Committee and the Security Council should all serve the efforts aimed at reaching a negotiated solution to Iran's nuclear issue.

China has taken note of the final report submitted by the Panel of Experts and hopes that the Panel will continue to carry out its activities in accordance with to the mandate of the resolution and in an objective and just manner. The Committee should properly address each case on the basis of clear facts, verified evidence and broad consultations.

At the meeting of foreign ministers in Lausanne in April, the six parties and Iran agreed on the core elements of a comprehensive agreement on the Iran nuclear issue. That marked a major breakthrough in the negotiations and constitutes a solid basis for a comprehensive agreement. In the next stage, as the deadline is fast approaching, all parties have demonstrated strong political will to reach an early comprehensive agreement through rigorous negotiations on the text of the agreement. China hopes that all parties will respect the results of the negotiations in Lausanne, pay attention to and resolve in a reasonable way all the legitimate concerns of all parties, avoid various actions aimed at interfering with each other and be decisive in making a timely political decision, so that a comprehensive agreement can be reached according to schedule.

An early comprehensive agreement on the Iran nuclear issue will contribute to the international non-proliferation regime and will also contribute to peace and stability in the Middle East. As a major party to the negotiations, China has always played a constructive role in moving the negotiations forward by taking a just and objective position. China will continue to take an active part in the negotiations and work tirelessly for a comprehensive long-term and proper solution to the Iran nuclear issue.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank Ambassador Oyarzun Marchesi, Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006), for his presentation of the quarterly report of the Committee covering the period 24 March to 24 June 2015, and I would like to congratulate him for his leadership. When it comes to the Iranian nuclear dossier, Chad welcomes the continued negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 in the framework of the Joint Plan of Action. In that regard, the Framework Agreement on the Joint Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme, signed in Lausanne, Switzerland last 2 April, represents a major step forward, as the framework makes it possible to envision an optimistic future for all stakeholders. We hope that the ongoing negotiations taking place in Vienna will make it possible to settle the technical details in order to reach a final agreement by the deadline of 30 June of this year.

In this critical phase in the peaceful settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue, we encourage all parties to act as constructively as possible in order to reach a successful conclusion to the negotiations. Furthermore, we express our concern over reports of the use of a computer virus to spy on the hotels where the negotiations are taking place, and we call on the competent authorities of the countries involved to do their utmost to shed light on those ill-intentioned activities and ensure appropriate conditions for continued negotiations.

We reiterate that the Islamic Republic of Iran has a right to develop a full civilian nuclear-energy industry, and that, in the event of a final agreement, all United Nations sanctions against Iran should be lifted.

With regard to the report of the 1737 Committee, we welcome the fact that no incidents have been reported during the past three months. We encourage members of the Committee to continue their discussions of the report, and we call on the Committee to continue facilitating the implementation of the provisions contained in Security Council resolutions 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008) and 1929 (2010).

To conclude, we hope that the ongoing negotiations will lead to a peaceful negotiated settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue and the immediate and complete lifting of all sanctions. We are pleased by the positive developments in those negotiations. They amply demonstrate that diplomacy can succeed better than confrontation and threats.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Permanent Representative of Spain for the report about the recent work of the Committee that he chairs. The Russian Federation thanks the Spanish delegation for its skilful leadership of that subsidiary body of the Security Council at this very delicate stage. We hope for a continuation of a business-like and constructive cooperation in the framework of the Committee in the interest of rapidly resolving the situation regarding the Iranian nuclear programme through political and diplomatic means.

We are continuing the search for compromise approaches on the remaining outstanding issues in the framework of negotiations of the group of six international mediators with the Iranian representatives. In that connection, we would like to note that it is very important for all parties to ensure progress in moving towards a final agreement. The key to the successful completion of negotiations on developing a final agreement on a comprehensive settlement of the situation regarding the Iranian nuclear programme is a precise and rigorous implementation of the basic agreements that were reached at the meeting of foreign ministers of the group of six and Iran at the beginning of April in Lausanne.

There is no doubt that achieving an agreement and implementing the expected arrangements will go hand in hand with an in-depth revision of the current sanctions regime. The discussion of concrete parameters is currently under way in the framework of the group of six plus Iran in Vienna. We will continue to do everything expected of us to resolve the questions relating to the Iranian nuclear programme once and for all, and the lifting of the sanctions against Teheran, which were introduced in accordance with a Security Council resolution.

Mr. Stehelin (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank the Ambassador of Spain for his briefing on the quarterly activities of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006), which established sanctions with regard to the Iranian nuclear programme.

Almost 20 months have passed since the adoption of the Joint Action Plan in November 2013. We have been involved with our partners in the E3+3 in intensive discussions with Iran.

The interim agreement in April this year in Lausanne marked an important step towards reestablishing the confidence of the international community in the exclusively peaceful purposes of Iran's nuclear programme. But now those negotiations are entering a crucial phase, since in principle an agreement is supposed to be reached before the end of the month, and it is undeniable that a lot remains to be done.

From the beginning, France has had a constant and consistent position: Iran has every right to develop nuclear energy for civilian purposes, but by no means should it be able to obtain a nuclear weapon. All our demands during the negotiations have been derived from that stance. The aim of the negotiations is to reach a robust agreement. That involves a long-term limitation on Iran's ability to carry out research and development, and a rigorous verification regime, which includes, when necessary, military sites, as has already been indicated by the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). That also involves the possibility of an automatic return to sanctions in the event of a violation of Iran's commitments.

That is the position of France: a simple one that is consistent with our rejection of nuclear proliferation and our wish to preserve the security of the region. We are therefore determined with our partners in the group of six to reach a good agreement before the end of the month, one that is robust and verifiable and that would make it possible to ensure the exclusively peaceful purposes of the Iranian nuclear programme. But Iran must take courageous steps forward.

Such an agreement also includes renewed cooperation with the IAEA, especially on the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear programme. In that regard, we regret the lack of substantial progress on that front since 2014. The latest report of the Director-General of the IAEA on the implementation of Iran's guarantees notes that no new practical measures have been proposed by Iran. The resolution of all issues on the potential military dimensions of Iran's nuclear programme is a key element for the re-establishment of confidence and, therefore, for the long-term agreement that we all want.

I wish to recall here that the Council's resolutions on Iran remain fully in force, pending a comprehensive solution to the proliferation crisis, as explicitly stated in the Joint Plan of Action.

We were therefore concerned to read in the final report of the Panel of Experts (S/2015/401, annex) that several attempts were made by Iran to bypass the sanctions, particularly the arms embargo that is burdening the country. Such attempts are contrary to the Council's resolutions and represent a destabilizing factor in the Middle East. This makes clear that vigilance remains necessary and that it would be irresponsible to lower our guard in terms of Iran's actions.

We thank the Panel of Experts for its tireless work and welcome the report, which is a valuable source of information in assisting Member States to strengthen implementation of the resolutions.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to thank the Permanent Representative of Spain for the information provided and his leadership in chairing the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006). I also thank the Panel of Experts for the preparation of the report (S/2015/401, annex) that is before the Council.

The changes taking place in the Middle East region are striking. Member States are waiting to see the final details of the agreement regarding the situation.

Jordan hopes that the agreement will contribute to strengthening trust and allaying fears regarding the Iranian nuclear programme, establish the basis for peace and stability in the Middle East and strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime in the Middle East and worldwide.

It is of utmost importance that the agreement be fully aligned with all international standards, particularly in terms of the physical security of nuclear installations, through full oversight by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Impacts on environmental issues must also be considered.

It would be important for the agreement to include a number of mechanisms to address possible future violations. Furthermore, we believe that we must begin by examining more seriously issues related to the arms embargo against Iran, in particular in the light of the information on violations contained in the Panel of Experts' report. It is a major challenge that must be considered extremely carefully.

Once again, we stress that the 1737 Committee should continue its work in the most effective manner possible and carry out the necessary inquiries regarding violations, in addition to continuing to cooperate positively with the Iranian Government in order to clear up issues regarding past violations. We also encourage those countries that have not yet submitted reports on the measures they have adopted to implement the Council's relevant resolutions, to do so with utmost haste. They must also cooperate positively with the Panel of Experts, as the success of the Committee's work is highly dependent on the reports submitted by Member States.

Finally, we value highly the role of the 1737 Committee, which assists countries and international organizations in the implementation of the Council's relevant resolutions through the consideration of countries' requests for the provision of technical assistance to Iran in various areas. We encourage such action, as it will facilitate States' and organizations' effective implementation of Council resolutions.

Mr. Taula (New Zealand): We thank the Permanent Representative of Spain, as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006), for his briefing. New Zealand commends the Chairman's work and that of the Committee and its Panel of Experts in maintaining oversight of this complex sanctions regime.

Today's briefing is somewhat overshadowed by an air of expectation around the P5+1 negotiations with Iran in pursuit of a comprehensive agreement on Iran's nuclear programme. New Zealand acknowledges the efforts of the parties to the negotiations. We reiterate our support for the process and hope that negotiations will be concluded in keeping with the original intent.

We appreciate that the negotiations are sensitive for the key parties involved, but trust that these sensitivities will not stand in the way of a comprehensive outcome. Be that as it may, today sanctions remain in place. They place obligations on States Members of the United Nations and, as such, the work of this Committee remains extant.

While we welcome the prospect of an agreement, until such time as one is reached the Committee must continue to monitor and improve the enforcement of existing sanctions, just as the Panel of Experts must continue to investigate violations and clarify obligations to Member States.

Finally, we encourage all parties involved in the negotiations to sustain the commitment and the political will required for a positive, peaceful and lasting solution.

Mr. Olguín Cigarroa (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Ambassador Román Oyarzun Marchesi for introducing the quarterly report on the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006). We also thank the Panel of Experts and its Coordinator for the presentation to the Committee on 1 June of its final report (S/2015/401, annex).

As we have noted previously, Chile has always attached great importance to the work of the non-proliferation Committee, whose sanctions regime remains fully in force.

Like other speakers, we continue to follow the negotiations currently under way between the E3+3 and Iran. In both the Security Council and the 1737 Committee, Chile has promoted a positive atmosphere conducive to the negotiations.

At this historic juncture, we call on the parties to demonstrate flexibility and responsibility at the international level. An eventual agreement would benefit the non-proliferation regime and provide assurance to the international community as to the exclusively peaceful role of the Iranian nuclear programme.

We urge Iran to continue cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Chile takes note of the latest report on the implementation of the safeguards agreement in connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions on Iran. We appreciate the support of the IAEA in the monitoring and verification of the voluntary measures referred to in the Joint Action Plan.

In conclusion, Chile considers that the current negotiations send an encouraging message about the value of diplomacy in resolving conflicts. We hope that the E3+3 and Iran will promptly achieve a comprehensive and verifiable agreement.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the presidency for convening this informative meeting on the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006), whose report (see S/2015/401, annex) was presented by Ambassador Mr. Román Oyarzun Marchesi, as Chair of the Committee. We congratulate him for his outstanding leadership of that subsidiary body.

Venezuela welcomes the significant progress made regarding the Joint Plan of Action, the negotiations undertaken between the P5+1 and Iran, and the commitment of all parties to continue the round of negotiations so as to achieve a broad agreement.

The possibility of achieving this important agreement aimed at reaching a comprehensive settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue in the long term is a tangible option today. It once again demonstrates than when a political commitment to reach negotiated solutions, engage in dialogue and achieve peace exists, this is the optimal path for overcoming violence and militaristic discourse, especially in a region deeply affected by conflicts and extremists.

The most important task in the next phase is to take advantage of this positive momentum and focus on resolving the differences through dialogue, negotiations and mutual trust. That will open a new phase in diplomatic relations with Iran, leading finally to the definitive lifting of the sanctions regime against that country, which has had negative economic and social effects on the Iranian people.

We are pleased that dialogue and cooperation between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have continued, as highlighted in the Agency's May 2015 report. We recognize the importance of the constructive role played by the IAEA in resolving the issues relating to Iran's nuclear programme. We hope that that cooperation will continue to be strengthened, and that the ongoing issues will be resolved, as will the measures relating to the implementation of the Joint Plan of Action. In that respect, we call on all parties involved to fulfil their respective commitments in good faith.

Venezuela reaffirms the sovereign right of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We therefore reiterate that article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which stipulates the inalienable right of all parties to the Treaty to continue with the research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without any discrimination whatsoever, should be fully respected. Venezuela attaches great importance to the efforts made by the international community to promote disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We express our full commitment to the strengthening of the international regime applicable to those issues through compliance with the obligations derived from the relevant binding legal instruments. Venezuela believes that holding the conference on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in line with the agreements achieved at the 1995 NPT Review Conference, is an extremely positive measure that would further strengthen peace and stability.

As the NPT Review Conference held in May 2015 was unable to adopt an outcome document, owing to the failure to implement the agreement reached 20 years ago, we believe that the international community should not abandon its efforts to promote the denuclearization of the Middle East on the basis of agreements freely entered into between States, in accordance with the guidelines defined by the Disarmament Commission in its 1999 report (A/54/42). To that end, we call on all Member States to focus their diplomatic and political efforts on reaching such an agreement without further delay.

For my country, weapons of mass destruction constitute a threat to international peace and security, and their elimination is therefore a priority for all of humankind.

Finally, we call on the Committee, in this crucial phase, to focus its attention on the new challenges and objectives that are arising under this new dynamic, in line with the principles of objectivity, impartiality and balance. In the area within its competence, the Committee must facilitate the ongoing negotiations. We hope that the diplomatic initiatives under way in other forums on the implementation of Iranian nuclear safeguards will have a positive effect on the work of the Council and lead to the permanent suspension of sanctions against that brotherly country.

Mr. Adejola (Nigeria): I thank the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006) for his presentation of the latest 90-day report of the Committee.

Nigeria takes due cognizance of the fact that there were no new incidents reported to the Committee in the period covered by the report. My delegation commends the Committee for its continued engagement, in particular in the area of assistance to States and international organizations in the implementation of the relevant Security Council measures relating to sanctions under resolution 1737 (2006). Indeed, that aspect of the Committee's work is in line with the efforts to protect the integrity of the decisions taken by the Council and to ensure that States do not unknowingly flout the sanctions regime under resolution 1737 (2006). We reiterate the useful purposes served when States seek appropriate guidance from the Committee on proposals for technical cooperation with Iran in matters under the purview of Committee's work and the merits of such an approach.

Regarding past requests made by the Committee on two incidents investigated by the Panel of Experts, we continue to urge Iran to respond to those requests as a demonstration of respect for the decisions of the Committee. We commend the efforts of the Panel of Experts, which have contributed significantly to the work of the Committee. That is indeed reflected positively in its final report (S/2015/401).

Finally, we continue to monitor and encourage the negotiations between the United States and Iran and between the P5+1 and Iran aimed at working out a comprehensive solution of the Iranian nuclear issues. We believe that it is in the interest of all to remain focused, constructive and committed to the negotiations.

Mr. Gimolieca (Angola): We thank Ambassador Román Oyarzun Marchesi for the presentation of the report and for his excellent work as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006).

We are pleased that no new incidents have been reported during the past three months, and we sincerely hope that there will be a positive outcome to the ongoing negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding its nuclear programme. We understand the sensitive nature of some of the issues being discussed by both sides in the negotiating process, and we hope that the negotiators will be able to find ways that address the concerns that Iran has expressed and those expressed by the E3+3 regarding ways to improve the inspections regime and to ensure that Iran addresses questions about its past nuclear activities.

According to recent reports in the media, Iranian and Western officials have clashed over key details of a final deal in recent days, and critical differences have emerged in the negotiating room. Since we do not have any information regarding those differences and the points of contention, all we can do is hope that those differences can be overcome and a final accord reached by the deadline of 20 June, so that the international sanctions, which have severely affected the Iranian people, can begin to be lifted.

Mr. Baublys (Lithuania): I would like to thank Ambassador Román Oyarzun Marchesi of Spain for his support to the Council as the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006).

Lithuania closely monitors the intensive efforts by the E3+3 and Iran to reach a final agreement on a Joint Plan of Action. We remain convinced that the vigorous system of sanctions and the strong commitment by Member States to uphold the implementation of sanctions continue to have a decisive impact in support of a negotiated solution. Now that negotiations are in the final stretch, Iran must show flexibility and willingness to provide the international community with verifiable guarantees of the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.

Iran's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is another key element in rebuilding the international community's trust. We welcome the conclusion by the IAEA that Iran has been implementing measures agreed in the Joint Plan of Action, but we call on Iran to increase cooperation in providing access to all relevant information, sites, material and personnel.

We thank the Panel of Experts for the final report (S/2015/401) and welcome its official public release on 1 June. The report provides a useful overview of Iran's compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and an analysis of reported violations. We remain concerned that while complying with the Joint Plan of Action, Iran continues to disregard other provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular those related to transfers of conventional weapons and related material. As the negotiations on the final agreement continue in Vienna, all Security Council sanctions imposed on Iran remain in full effect and all Member States must implement them, including by reporting cases of non-compliance to the Committee. Furthermore, Iran itself must cooperate with the Committee, inter alia by providing the information requested by the Panel during the course of its investigations.

Finally, let me underscore our hope that the current talks between the E3+3 and Iran will translate into a comprehensive and verifiable solution, which would strengthen long-term international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Malaysia.

I join others in thanking the Permanent Representative of Spain for his briefing on the work carried out by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006) during the reporting period. My delegation commends the Chair for steering the Committee through a particularly significant period, against the backdrop of the P5+1 and Iran's negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme. The Chair's previous briefing to the Council in March (see S/PV.7412) came at a time when the P5+1 and Iran were close to reaching an understanding on a favourable agreement on Iran's nuclear programme. Today, we meet again at a similar, if not a more important juncture. In a matter of days, the parties are expected to finalize the technical annexes and conclude a comprehensive solution to the issue.

Malaysia is of the view that the P5+1 and Iran negotiations on the framework agreement constitute an important development in efforts to promote regional and international peace, security and stability. The commitment and flexibility shown by all parties in reaching an initial agreement constitute positive steps towards non-proliferation and nuclear security — particularly in view of the lengthy and difficult negotiations that have taken place for nearly 10 years. In that regard, Malaysia welcomes the political understanding on the parameters reached by the parties in Lausanne in April 2015. We hope that the talks will continue to pave the way for all parties to conclude a long-term comprehensive solution.

Malaysia remains optimistic for a positive outcome from the talks, and we also underline the Committee's support to all parties in the negotiations. However, the present measures, established under the relevant Council resolutions, remain valid, and the Committee remains committed to carrying out its responsibilities. Accordingly, at the present stage, the Committee should maintain its function of providing guidance and assistance to Member States and international organizations on the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolution, upon request. My delegation believes that the Committee will continue to deliberate its decisions in a cautious and thorough manner, in accordance with its mandate.

Finally, on the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1929 (2010), Malaysia congratulates the members of the Panel on the renewal of its mandate earlier this month. My delegation thanks the Panel for its final report, which is currently under consideration by the Committee. We hope the Panel will soon have a full complement of members, given the important tasks that lie ahead of it.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7470

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7470th meeting

Wednesday, 24 June 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ibrahim	(Malaysia)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Moura Lucas
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	Chile	Mr. Olguín Cigarroa
	China	Mr. Xu Zhongsheng
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mrs. Jakubonė
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mr. Adamu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: Let me open with my best wishes to our Muslim colleagues on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadam — Ramadan Kareem.

The Secretary-General is encouraged by the recent affirmations by Prime Minister Netanyahu of his commitment to "the idea of a sustainable two-State solution", but notes that this must be translated into actions. This includes a halt to sensitive and unilateral activities in the West Bank, including settlements, that could prejudice a final status agreement or prevent the establishment of a viable, contiguous Palestinian State. That message was reaffirmed by major donor countries at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for assistance to the Palestinians held in Brussels on 27 May.

The Secretary-General welcomes the measures taken by Israel to ease some restrictions on Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, in particular during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, although some have been revoked in response to repeated rocket fire from Gaza. He encourages Israel to sustain and expand those confidence-building measures, which enable the legitimate movement of people and goods in and between Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and improve the quality of life of Palestinians.

The security situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remained tense. A total of 186 Palestinians, including 28 children and two women, were injured. Five members of the Israeli security forces were also injured. The Israeli security forces conducted approximately 400 search-and-arrest operations, resulting in the arrest of 510 Palestinians. In three separate incidents, on 20 May, 10 June and 14 June, three Palestinian men were shot and killed by the Israeli security forces. First, a man was killed when an Israeli military Jeep overturned during an operation to arrest suspected militants. The second incident occurred as a result of clashes with Israeli military forces. The third man was killed after ramming his vehicle into two Israeli policewomen.

On 19 June, a Palestinian shot at an Israeli vehicle travelling near a West Bank settlement close to Ramallah, killing one Israeli civilian and injuring another. While claims of responsibility have not been confirmed, some Palestinian factions, including Hamas, praised the attack, which the United Nations immediately condemned. On 22 June, an Israeli policeman was critically wounded when he was stabbed at the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem. The attacker also remains in a critical condition after being shot by the policeman. In total, six members of the Israeli security forces were injured.

The Secretary-General remains deeply concerned about the situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israel, notably those in administrative detention, including Khader Adnan, detained since 8 July 2014, who has now been on hunger strike for 51 days. The Israeli Government's decision on 14 June to reintroduce draft legislation to permit the force-feeding of prisoners on hunger strike under certain conditions would, if approved by the Knesset, contravene international standards.

The demolition of homes and structures in the West Bank has also continued. This month, 52 structures, including 17 residences, were demolished, leading to the displacement of 29 Palestinians, including 17 children. On 9 June, the Israeli High Court of Justice rejected a petition to restore planning authority to Palestinian villages in Area C of the West Bank. The planning and zoning system as it stands makes it virtually impossible for Palestinians to build on or develop their land in Area C.

I reiterate our concerns over the fate of 7,000 Palestinian Bedouin and herders in 46 residential areas of the West Bank, who may be at risk of forcible transfer as Israel advances its plan to relocate these communities to three sites in Area C. The plan may be linked to settlement expansion in the El area and others, which would seriously jeopardize the two-State solution.

In the Gaza Strip, the desperate situation was exacerbated by a number of security incidents. During the reporting period, 10 rockets were fired by Palestinian militants from Gaza, thankfully without casualties or damage. The Secretary-General has publicly condemned those incidents. A further 11 rockets were test-fired towards the sea. The Israeli security forces responded by conducting 11 air strikes on militant sites in Gaza, again without resulting in injuries. Concerns are also mounting in relation to internal divisions within Gaza, including a potential developing threat from militant salafist individuals or groups. On 2 June, Hamas security forces reportedly killed a salafist accused of firing rockets at Israel and arrested a number of others suspected of carrying out those attacks. The Israeli security forces shot and injured 12 Palestinians. I call on Israel to implement measures to minimize incidents that result in injuries in the access-restricted areas on land and at sea.

The Secretary-General is closely following media reports that suggest that a flotilla is expected to group and head towards Gaza in the coming days. He continues to believe that a flotilla would not help to address the dire situation in Gaza and reiterates his calls for the Government of Israel to lift all closures, with due consideration of Israel's legitimate security concerns.

The ever-challenging circumstances in Gaza highlight the urgent need to strengthen Palestinian unity. Conflicts, poor governance and the closures have crushed Gaza's economy. Unemployment spiked to 43 per cent at the end of 2014.

I am nevertheless encouraged by Prime Minister Hamdallah's commitment to overcoming these obstacles, including the issue of public-sector employees in Gaza, by reintegrating the governance framework under a single authority. The willingness and capacity of all Palestinian factions to resolve their differences, including those related to border crossings with Israel and Egypt, is integral to lifting the blockade of Gaza and advancing Palestinian efforts to achieve statehood.

I note the 22 June decision of the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Liberation Organization to form a committee to consult with all Palestinian factions in order to form a national unity Government. I encourage all factions to maintain a positive approach to those discussions, which are critical to the future of Palestinian reconciliation.

The Secretary-General welcomed Egypt's decision, following consultations with President Abbas, to open the Rafah crossing from 13 to 19 June and for three days this week in both directions. Recognizing that such decisions critically depend on the security environment, and without diminishing the United Nations primary objective to see the full lifting of all the closures in the framework of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), it is our hope that the Rafah crossing can be opened on a regular basis to help relieve the suffering of the people of Gaza.

While overall progress in the reconstruction of Gaza remains far too slow, the establishment of the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism has been vital to facilitating the entry of material. As of 23 June, more than 88,500 homeowners have procured construction material. Furthermore, 135 construction projects out of 202 submitted have been approved by the Israeli authorities. I welcome today's approval by the Government of Palestine for the entry under the Mechanism of material for constructing 16,000 new homes to help address the housing gap.

With major construction work expected to begin imminently, there is an urgent need for additional funding for the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism, which will exhaust its funds in September.

The Secretary-General took note of the issuance on Monday of the report of the independent commission of inquiry established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1 (A/HRC/29/52). While we do not comment on the substance of such reports, it is our hope that the commission's report will contribute to bringing justice to victims of last year's war and encourage the parties to engage in serious and credible examinations of their own behaviour.

I will now say a few words about the situation in Lebanon and Syria.

Lebanon has now been without a president for over a year. The vacuum has prevented the Parliament from legislating on urgent issues and has thereby affected the economy and the Government's ability to function effectively. Since 4 June, Prime Minister Tammam Salam has suspended regular cabinet meetings to ease political tensions over upcoming senior appointments in the Lebanese armed forces. Along Lebanon's eastern border with Syria, Hizbullah has reportedly seized a number of positions from armed extremist groups, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Daesh and the Al-Nusra Front, in the region of Qalamoun up to the outskirts of Arsal. The Lebanese armed forces have been deployed in and around Arsal to prevent the fighting from reaching the town.

Six months after the launch of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, we urge donors to fulfil existing pledges to assist the 1.2 million registered refugees and Lebanese host communities.

General calm remained in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, despite escalatory rhetoric on both sides and security concerns in the Golan Heights. Israel continued to violate Lebanese airspace on an almost daily basis.

Regarding Syria, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy continues the Geneva consultations with Syrian, regional and international delegations with a view to developing recommendations on the operationalization of the Geneva communiqué. On 4 June, he held discussions with the Syrian Opposition Coalition in Istanbul and from 15 to 17 June with Syrian officials in Damascus. In Damascus, he also raised issues related to the protection of civilians, including the unacceptable use of barrel bombs by Government forces, while also condemning the use of gas canisters by opposition groups.

The Turkish Government has raised concerns about refugee flows resulting from the efforts to oust ISIL from the Tal Abyad area in Syria. According to the information available to the United Nations, approximately 25,000 Syrians from that area sought refuge in Turkey, although we believe that 2,000 refugees have reportedly already crossed back into Syria. It is neither just nor possible to expect Turkey to continue to face those refugee pressures alone. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is investigating allegations of forceful displacement of Arabs and Turkmen populations. To date, we are unaware of any evidence that it is taking place on a wide-scale or in a systematic way.

In conclusion, let me reiterate our concern that accepting a fatalistic narrative on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will only accelerate the deterioration of the situation. It will also constitute a grave injustice to those on both sides who want to live peacefully and securely as neighbours, as two peoples whose pasts will be forever linked by their ancestral ties to the region and whose futures stand only to benefit, including economically. Also, the conflict cannot be viewed in isolation from the regional turmoil. The risk of radicalization in the occupied Palestinian territory is heightened by the continued lack of a political horizon. Absent courageous leadership, a sustainable solution will remain a distant and unachievable goal.

The President: I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.20 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7471

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7471st meeting

Thursday, 25 June 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ibrahim	(Malaysia)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Moura Lucas
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Aguirre Vacchieri
	China	Mr. Xu Zhongsheng
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mrs. Jakubonė
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Thirty-sixth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2015/320)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Thirty-sixth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2015/320)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Côte d'Ivoire to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2015/471, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Angola, Chad, Chile, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, Nigeria, Spain, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I wish to draw Council members' attention to document S/2015/320, which contains the thirty-sixth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it, contained in document S/2015/471. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by a show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2226 (2015).

I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Bouah-Kamon (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the Security Council for the attention given to Côte d'Ivoire for more than a decade following the political and military crisis that took place in the country. My thanks also go to the Secretary-General and, through him, to his Special Representative, Ms. Aichatou Mindaoudou Souleymane, to the staff of United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and to the French forces in Côte d'Ivoire.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the Council's deliberations today that renewed the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, maintaining the current uniformed personnel component. The Council decision to extend the mandate to 30 June 2016 fully accords with the desire of the Ivorian authorities, who expect to benefit from the invaluable support of UNOCI with regard to the major challenges that remain.

Despite the progress that has been achieved, as duly recognized by resolution 2226 (2015), which was just adopted, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire is aware that it is important to tirelessly continue its efforts. My country is particularly attentive to the issue of human rights and intends to make every effort in the ongoing search for specific and comprehensive solutions to the problem. The political dialogue with the opposition continues within the permanent dialogue framework in order to arrive at national reconciliation and social cohesion, as well as the organization of peaceful, open, inclusive and transparent elections. The reforms undertaken in the security sector, which have enjoyed unprecedented success, will be continued. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration work — whose reinsertion section will be continued so as to absorb former combatants who have not yet been taken into account — will be completed by 30 June 2015.

The year 2015 will be marked in Côte d'Ivoire by the organization of a presidential election. That will be a crucial step for the re-establishment of peace and the consolidation of our institutions. It is understood that the successful organization of that election is the primary responsibility of the Government, as the resolution just adopted asserts so well. Nevertheless, the support of the United Nations and the international community will be useful with the approach of this crucial deadline in the political life of Côte d'Ivoire. From that perspective, my delegation welcomes the Security Council's decision to allow UNOCI to provide logistical support to Côte d'Ivoire for the election planned for October 2015. Among other things, that support will enable access to the areas most difficult to reach.

Ensuring security around the upcoming elections again presents the problem of providing the national police and the Force Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire with adequate and sufficient material to maintain order and secure the borders. In that regard, my delegation would like to reiterate the Ivorian Government's request regarding the total lifting of the embargo on arms coming into Côte d'Ivoire to allow our defence and security forces to appropriately fulfil the State mission and to protect and secure future elections.

My delegation also takes note of the Security Council's wish to see UNOCI, the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the country teams in the region closely cooperate for greater oversight of the embargo and of the fight against the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to renew its expression of gratitude to the Security Council and to reiterate the Ivorian Government's commitment to make its cooperation with UNOCI a perfect example of success that can be cited throughout the world.

The President: The Council has thus concluded its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.

United Nations

S/PV.7472

Provisional

Security Council

Seventieth year

7472nd meeting

Thursday, 25 June 2015, 10.20 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ibrahim	(Malaysia)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Moura Lucas
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Ms. Sapag Muñoz de la Peña
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mrs. Jakubonė
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

Post-conflict peacebuilding

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its eighth session (S/2015/174)a

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sThe meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Post-conflict peacebuilding

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its eighth session (S/2015/174)

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Permanent Representative of Brazil and former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/174, which contains the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its eighth session.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Permanent Representative of Brazil and former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota: I wish to highlight some specific elements from the report that I believe deserve the particular attention of the Security Council.

First, the Commission's work over the past year has once again confirmed that its potential as a platform leveraging the political weight of its members in support of peace consolidation should be further utilized. An example of how the Commission can increasingly use its political strength was the collective and determined position it took in the early stages of the Ebola outbreak. The Commission helped spur the international community and other parts of the United Nations system to focus on the risk posed by the crisis to the peacebuilding gains in the three most affected countries. The terms of reference of the United Nations-led Ebola-recovery initiatives have therefore included areas identified by the Commission that deserve special attention in the overall recovery strategies and support programmes.

Secondly, the Commission is uniquely placed to promote greater harmony among the subregional, regional and international dimensions of post-conflict response. One of the Commission's key priority areas in 2014 was therefore to actively engage with its African members and to establish deep and dynamic partnerships with Africa's regional and subregional organizations. Our experience from Guinea-Bissau to Burundi and the Central African Republic confirms that greater regional and subregional coherence is a key factor in support of peacebuilding-related efforts. As we continue to integrate the regional and subregional perspectives into the work of the Commission, we will further strengthen the relevance and weight of its country-specific engagement.

Thirdly, in 2014 the Peacebuilding Commission convened its first-ever annual session with a view to exploring where broader intergovernmental policy development is necessary to help countries reduce the risk of conflict.

As the Commission continued to explore various avenues for predictable financing for peacebuilding, its focus on domestic resource mobilization and the fight against illicit financial flows was a critical step towards identifying possible policy areas requiring Member States' individual and collective action. The challenge posed by illicit financial flows and similar systemic gaps in intergovernmental policy related to financing for peacebuilding highlights the interdependence among security, institutional and socioeconomic initiatives in the promotion of peace.

This was a common point made during the second annual session, which took place two days ago and focused on the challenges for securing predictable financing for peacebuilding. We thank the Swedish Foreign Minister for her presence at the closing ceremony of that session. The Commission will continue to position itself to promote further coherence and synergy among policies and actions across the political, security and developmental dimensions of peace consolidation.

Fourthly, the gender dimension of peacebuilding deserves our continuing attention and unwavering commitment. While women endure the tragic consequences of violent conflicts, they are also key agents for societal transformation in post-conflict societies. The special event that the Commission hosted in collaboration with UN-Women in September 2014 shed light on local peacebuilding initiatives led by women in diverse contexts. This year the Commission will further explore practical ways of mainstreaming the gender dimension into its country-specific engagements.

Fifthly, defining and improving the nature and scope of its advisory function to the Security Council and the General Assembly continued to be the Commission's main objective in 2014. The Commission is uniquely positioned to complement their work by ensuring that inclusive socioeconomic development contributes to peace and security and reduces the risk of the emergence of violent conflict or relapse into it. The advisory function for both principal organs should help to strengthen the integrated and long-term commitment of the United Nations and other international and regional actors to countries emerging from conflict, something that I stressed in several statements I made on behalf of the Commission at various Security Council briefings and debates in 2014. In that connection, I believe the Council can draw more practically and systematically on the Commission's advice, particularly when mandates of missions are being revisited in the context of changing priorities or of drawdown and transition. That crucial aspect of the Commission's advisory role deserves to be discussed during the informal interactive dialogue to be held later this afternoon under your guidance, Mr. President.

The members of the Commission that are also members of the Security Council, such as Malaysia and Chile, as well as the five permanent members that are also permanent members of the Peacebuilding Commission, are in a unique position to provide leadership, guidance and sustained commitment in order to further deepen and strengthen this advisory function.

Sixthly and finally, the section of the report on the conclusions and forward agenda charts the course of action for the Commission in 2015. The forward agenda reflects the Commission's determination to follow up on key thematic and country-specific approaches that were initiated in 2014, thus ensuring continuity in focus and consistency in approach.

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/7 and Security Council resolution 1947 (2010), the Commission has capitalized on the experience accumulated from its mandated annual reporting to the General Assembly and the Security Council on progress made in taking forward relevant recommendations from the 2010 review of the peacebuilding architecture and initiated advance preparation for the second five-year review, called for by both principal organs, to be conducted this year.

The purpose of the advance preparation was to foster broader ownership of the review among Member States through inclusive and extensive consultations on the objectives, scope, methodology and modalities for conducting the review. The advance preparation reflected agreement among Member States that the challenges facing the countries emerging from conflict should be central to the 2015 review and thus proposed that the review be grounded in specific country studies.

A commitment to help States avoid relapse into conflict was the motivation for the creation in 2005 of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund. Member States agreed that the 2015 review needed to take that original motivation as its point of departure. The terms of reference for the review were initially developed by and consulted within the Commission and subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly and the Security Council. They should help identify areas of progress and remaining gaps in international assistance to countries emerging from conflict.

The two-stage design of the review, by which an advisory group of experts would undertake country studies and propose actionable and practical recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly and the Security Council, would hopefully ensure that the two principal organs are able to take an informed decision on the future of the United Nations broader peacebuilding architecture. That architecture includes the three components established in 2005, as well as other relevant United Nations operational entities that contribute to building lasting and sustainable peace through a variety of political and programmatic tools. We are looking forward to the imminent release of the report of the advisory group of experts, under the able chairmanship of former Ambassador Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala, and to the initiation of the intergovernmental stage of the review.

I wish to conclude this briefing by acknowledging the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office, of Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco and his predecessor, Judy Cheng-Hopkins, and their team in support of the Commission's work and activities in 2014. We will continue to count on the Office's support as we seek to pursue the Commission's objectives, as well as on its competent management of the Peacebuilding Fund. Through the work undertaken by the Commission and the Fund, the synergy and complementarity between the political and programmatic dimensions of peacebuilding can bring greater effectiveness to our investment in the country concerned.

The path to healing the scars caused by war and rebuilding the institutions that deliver security, justice, basic services and economic opportunity and that protect fundamental rights is long and fraught with enormous challenges. I am convinced that the efforts of the United Nations in that area should remain people-centred. We must listen actively to the voices of the people who are the most affected by violent conflicts. We must learn from and be guided by their experiences and needs. I believe that in 2015, under the stewardship of Sweden and with the unwavering commitment of its member States, the Peacebuilding Commission can be the locus of such partnerships. I also hope that the ongoing review will generate practical recommendations and the requisite political momentum to adapt and orient the Commission to that end.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Skoog.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): Thank you very much, Mr. President, for the invitation, for convening this meeting and also for the excellent contribution that you presented on behalf of the Security Council at the annual session of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), held earlier this week. And I would like to congratulate the Permanent Representative of Brazil, Ambassador Patriota, for his very strong leadership and commitment during his chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission last year.

The world today is torn by more violent conflict than it has been in a very long time, leaving in its wake unprecedented suffering and displacement. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported this weekend that more people fled their homes last year than at any time since records began. More than half the people displaced by conflict and persecution are children.

It is against that backdrop that we are meeting today, during this peacebuilding week. Peacebuilding is about preventing relapse into conflict by holistically supporting countries emerging from conflict on a path towards sustained peace. It is therefore about establishing the nexus between security and development. To that end, we need to be more effective and coherent in United Nations activities that assist national peacebuilding efforts.

The expert group report on the 10-year review of the peacebuilding architecture is expected to be submitted very soon. That review, conducted simultaneously with the peace operations review and the high-level review of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), offers a unique opportunity to strengthen the work of the United Nations in peace and security. I am hopeful that all three will reinvigorate our collective efforts to build and sustain peace.

I would now like to turn to the work of the Commission. I would argue that its vision and usefulness remain as valid as ever. We have to be more effective in addressing the challenge of helping countries transition from war to lasting peace, including by improving strategic planning in the United Nations system; helping countries strengthen their national capacities, including institution-building; ensuring predictable and flexible funding; improving the coordination of international post-conflict activities; and providing a diversified intergovernmental forum that can help ensure greater coherence of support and extend the period of political attention.

I would now like to outline the focus areas of the Peacebuilding Commission during the ongoing ninth session. First, let me turn to peacebuilding in Ebola recovery. The three countries most affected by the Ebola disease outbreak — Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea — are all on the PBC agenda. The Commission has been instrumental in ensuring that peacebuilding priorities are addressed as part of the recovery efforts, including the need to accelerate support for institution-building. We will continue to advocate for this, not least at the upcoming high-level meeting on Ebola recovery to be hosted by the Secretary-General in a few weeks' time.

Secondly, with respect to the Peacebuilding Review, as previously mentioned, the work of the advisory group is about to come to an end, since it will submit its report in the next few days. We are eagerly awaiting its analysis and recommendations, and look forward to the findings, which will provide important input for the intergovernmental negotiations. That review can tie into the review of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, as well as the review of peace operations.

Thirdly, there will be a focus on continued support for and coordination with regional organizations, not least the African Union. By drawing on the work initiated last year by my predecessor, Ambassador Patriota, we will identify ways to deepen the dialogue with regional organizations to see how our different comparative advantages can best be utilized.

Fourthly, the Commission will consider the recommendations emanating from the annual session of 2015, held on Tuesday, focusing on the issues of predictable financing for peacebuilding. In addition, the Peacebuilding Commission will continue to move forward with the cross-cutting issues of gender equality and women's empowerment in all peacebuilding efforts. That is a crucial aspect of sustainable peace and development.

I look forward to this afternoon's informal interactive dialogue on post-conflict peacebuilding. It is an important opportunity for us to reflect on how the relationship between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council can be strengthened. Against the backdrop of the UNHCR report this weekend and what we all know to be the untenable strains on the humanitarian system as a whole, I believe we must unite our efforts now to further enhance the effectiveness and coherence of the international response to post-conflict challenges and better support national efforts to avoid conflict and sustain peace.

The President: I thank Mr. Skoog for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): Let me begin by thanking Ambassador Patriota and Ambassador Skoog for their briefings today and for all their hard work, past, present and future, in chairing the Peacebuilding Commission.

I would like to take this opportunity to talk not about peacebuilding in theory but peacebuilding in practice, and in particular I will draw some lessons about peacebuilding from a country that has played a prominent role in my own career, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nearly 20 years ago I served in the British delegation to the Dayton peace talks and later as British Ambassador to Bosnia from 2005 to 2008. I witnessed the progress made in building and sustaining peace following years of bloodshed. Bosnia still faces challenges — dysfunctional politics and high unemployment, to name but two. But as we prepare to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, we should also recognize the considerable progress that the country has made since 1995, and we can learn wider lessons from the international community's experience there. I recognize that every conflict is unique and solutions cannot be cut and pasted from one context to another, but I believe that as a Council we can draw four key lessons.

The first is that we need to do even more on conflict prevention. In the Balkans the international community failed to act early. We knew about some of the horrors that were being committed, but lacked the political will to take action. Today, we live in an age of immediately accessible information. We should never claim that we did not know a conflict was brewing. The challenge for the Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the whole United Nations system is to find the political will to act early. Early action can prevent enormous suffering. It is also cost-effective. Our failure to prevent conflict has contributed significantly to the $19.7 billion in humanitarian needs and nearly 60 million refugees we are now dealing with and has resulted in an $8.5 billion peacekeeping budget.

No conflict-affected State has achieved any of the Millennium Development Goals. As the British economist Paul Collier has said, "War is development in reverse". Given global trends, our ability to eradicate poverty will be wholly dependent on our ability to reduce violent conflict. That is why Goal 16 of the sustainable development goals is so critical.

The second lesson I took from Bosnia is the primacy of a political process in building and sustaining peace. The Dayton Peace Agreement is not perfect, but it ended the war, which featured the worst fighting in Europe since the Second World War, and it gave the country a foundation on which to build. Just as the recent peace operations review recommends, our efforts on peacekeeping and peacebuilding must all start and finish with a political process. For those settlements to stick, they must be sustainable and inclusive, with women's involvement throughout, and they must be properly funded. In 2012, only 4 per cent of all overseas development aid to fragile States was spent on promoting inclusive politics. The majority is spent on reconstruction and service delivery. We need to recognize that peacebuilding and State-building are not the same thing. The comparative advantage of the United Nations lies in forging and sustaining political deals to create the space for effective State-building, and that should be the primary focus of any political or peacekeeping mission.

The third lesson is the need for sustained attention and patience from the international community in building a lasting peace. Nearly 20 years on from Dayton, the Council, the European Union, NATO and many others continue to support Bosnia's transition to a peaceful and prosperous State. Countries in the region also have a constructive role to play. Too often, however, our attention drifts. In 2011, Sierra Leone was categorized as an aid orphan by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. International aid fell away, and Sierra Leone was punished for its success in reducing conflict. The spread of Ebola to Sierra Leone last year showed how fragile peacebuilding gains can be and how easily they are rolled back. So we must learn that there are no shortcuts to building durable, national institutions. It takes time. The World Bank estimates that making meaningful improvements to institutions takes between 10 and 17 years at a minimum. Long-term, predictable support is crucial.

The United Kingdom is playing its part. We have kept our promise to spend 0.7 per cent of our gross national income on overseas aid, at least 30 per cent of which will go to conflict-affected States. We are the second-largest financial contributor to the United Nations system, and we are the largest contributor to the Peacebuilding Fund, having provided $82 million since 2011.

My final reflection from Bosnia is that the international community cannot want peace more than the people themselves. Political elites must rise above political, ethnic and religious divides and make tough choices in order to consolidate peace and move forward. Bosnia's leaders still grapple with that challenge, as do the leaders of many of the countries on the Council's agenda. But should they prove that they can overcome their differences, the Council must be poised and ready to give them its full support.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassadors of Sweden and Brazil for their helpful briefings and for the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on its eighth session (S/2015/174), which covers its work during 2014.

I will speak only briefly, since the full text of my statement will appear on the website of the Spanish mission. I will therefore address two main points — first what I found most interesting in the report, and then the issues that Spain considers to be peacebuilding priorities during its time on the Council — in other words, how we can make a difference from our seat on the Council.

The Ambassador of the United Kingdom said rightly that peacebuilding takes time. That is true, and it is very important. It can take years or decades. I would add that it takes time and money. We need significant financial resources in order to build peace. I believe there is no better investment than an investment in peacebuilding, because there is nothing more expensive than a State's relapse into conflict. The best investment the international community can make in a State is ensuring its stability. The worst investment is failing to provide the necessary resources and thus allowing a State to relapse into conflict once more. Unfortunately, history is littered with instances where, due to lack of investment or attention, countries have relapsed into conflict. I therefore believe it is vital that we find ways to create financing systems for facilitating something that is fundamental, but very difficult to achieve — financial predictability and annual commitments. The Peacebuilding Fund must have sufficient resources to address situations where, for one reason or another, there is instability that could lead to a State's relapse into conflict.

That is my first point. The second, as I said, is sharing with the Council some of Spain's objectives for its two-year membership of the Council, of which four are key.

The first is strengthening preventive action. The Council is aware that Spain, together with Turkey, launched the Alliance of Civilizations, which has functioned splendidly as an instrument of preventive diplomacy. Next week, we will adopt a new resolution on it by consensus, which should be a further step forward in consolidating the Alliance's role as a powerful instrument for combating conflict situations.

Secondly, we will work to make greater use of mediation. With Morocco, we launched a mediation initiative in the Mediterranean region, and we recently held a meeting in Madrid whose outcome will be circulated to all of the States Members of the United Nations so they can see the results in detail.

Thirdly, we are one of the biggest supporters there is of the concept of the responsibility to protect. Two days ago, a meeting of focal points on the responsibility to protect took place in Madrid.

Another of our goals is strengthening regional factors. In our view, when a State is emerging from conflict, there can be no better instrument for restoring it and preventing its relapse into conflict than the region itself. A region is able to help, to overcome obstacles to trade and establish a protection mechanism that can enable a State to definitively re-establish stability.

Fourthly, we believe in the importance of justice. The fact is that we cannot conceive of peace without justice, nor can reconciliation be achieved without it. All of those concepts are closely intertwined, and that is why Spain has always been a staunch defender of the International Criminal Court. We will spare no effort to promote its work.

A fifth goal that Spain will promote is working to achieve the thoughtful convergence of four mechanisms that are already established and under way. The first is the peace operations review process, which must, of course, include the vital component of an exit strategy for peacekeeping operations. The second is the Peacebuilding Commission's review of its own architecture. The third is the review of the important resolution 1325 (2000), on which we are working very productively with the delegation of the United Kingdom. We hope that a new resolution will be adopted on 22 October. The fourth is the post-2015 development agenda, which, we should remember, includes goals for peacebuilding that we should be bearing in mind.

In conclusion, Spain will attempt to help, to the extent possible, to promote the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, because we consider it to be the body that is best positioned to provide continued support to post-conflict countries. It is therefore also the best early-warning mechanism for preventing such States from relapsing into conflict or instability.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I want to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this briefing. I thank Ambassador Olof Skoog, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota for their very insightful perspectives. We are greatly indebted to all the Chairs of the country-specific configurations and the Peacebuilding Support Office for their commitment to advancing the work of the PBC.

Today's briefing underlines the critical importance of the PBC as an invaluable intergovernmental mechanism for organizing and promoting international support to countries emerging from conflict. It highlights the several challenges that continue not only to reduce the effectiveness of the PBC but also to hinder peacebuilding efforts in countries on its agenda.

The Security Council has a role and indeed a responsibility to support the PBC in implementing its mandate. To contribute to that effort, there must be a clear perception of the gaps and challenges in the PBC's support for the countries on its agenda. There are several gaps in institution-building efforts, especially in such areas as reforming the security sector, strengthening the rule of law, supporting national dialogue, promoting community reconciliation, encouraging disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, enhancing women's empowerment and tackling unemployment.

The common thread that runs through these areas is a lack of adequate, predictable and assured financing for peacebuilding. That underscores the compelling need for the PBC to continue to explore and develop robust strategies for resource mobilization in order to implement its very important mandate. This is why we believe that the Commission's second annual session, held only two days ago, was critical for highlighting measures at our disposal for mobilizing financing for peacebuilding.

It is our view that domestic sources of financing for peacebuilding can be improved by strengthening States' capacities to effectively manage natural resources, design and implement appropriate tax regimes and tax collection, promote transparency and accountability in the management of public resources and curb illicit financial flows. While all of those measures imply more responsibility for Governments, they would also enhance their legitimacy. We encourage wider support for domestic resource generation efforts through the provision of the relevant technical training for experts from those countries.

We believe it is unrealistic to expect that the burden of financing peacebuilding should rest on internally generated revenues from countries emerging from conflict. They will clearly continue to count on financial support from the international community as a demonstration of its commitment to post-conflict recovery.

Making financial contributions to pooled financing mechanisms for peacebuilding is perhaps one way of demonstrating that commitment. Nigeria reaffirms its support for the Peacebuilding Fund as one such pooled financing mechanism. We understand how critically important it is to enhance the application of pooled financing mechanisms, because they encourage aid alignment behind Government priorities, foster greater coherence of international responses to complex situations, reduce transaction costs, share risks and strengthen mutual accountability.

Experience demonstrates that national leadership, ownership and inclusivity are central to post-conflict peacebuilding and must be reinforced by the promotion of the inclusive policies so essential to genuine national ownership. We believe that where peacebuilding efforts are rooted in inclusive consultative processes, the State and its institutions have greater legitimacy and are more trusted. On the other hand, the absence of inclusive policies in the wake of conflict all too often results in control of a State being contested and can lead to a violent relapse into conflict.

There is no doubt that State legitimacy and the rebuilding of State institutions in the aftermath of conflict are vital and critical to the attainment of sustainable peace. That is why, in our view, the security sector and justice institutions must be accorded special attention as organs for the protection of the population and the defence of the State. We call on all partners to support capacity-building for the police, improving prison conditions and strengthening justice institutions in States that are emerging from conflict in order to ensure some measure of sustainable peace.

Nigeria welcomes the priority that the United Nations gives to advancing women's participation in post-conflict, political and development processes. It is significant that more women have been appointed as mediators and special envoys by the Secretary-General over the past five years. Since women are disproportionately affected by conflicts and in conflicts, it is appropriate that women mediators, who can relate better to other women, are involved in the search for peace.

As a keen contributor to global, regional and subregional peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding efforts, Nigeria is encouraged by the focus of the ongoing 2015 review of the peacebuilding architecture. We welcome the emphasis on strengthening relationships with the African Union and other subregional organizations. I listened intently to the statement of the Ambassador of Spain, who has so eloquently highlighted this. I believe that enhanced synergy between the PBC and regional and subregional organizations would bolster our collective efforts.

It is our hope that the five case studies, all of them on the African continent, will yield valuable peacebuilding lessons derived from the experiences of the countries concerned.

We want to affirm and reaffirm our strong support for the PBC, and we remain fully committed to its objectives. We urge Member States and all stakeholders to strengthen their engagement with the Commission, since doing so would greatly improve its capacity to contribute to the building of a safer, more secure and peaceful world.

Mr. Taula (New Zealand): We thank the representatives of Brazil and Sweden.

New Zealand welcomes this opportunity to discuss the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (S/2015/174). We support the report's recommendations, in particular those focused on increasing the interactivity between the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the Security Council. New Zealand believes there is great value in improved information flows between the two bodies, especially in order to improve the management of United Nations mission transitions. Most importantly, there should be more effective cooperation and coordination by United Nations actors on ground. We look forward to discussing these ideas further this afternoon.

New Zealand also commends the report's recommendation that a strategy be developed to strengthen gender perspectives in country-specific engagement. We believe that broader engagement with women will have far-reaching, positive effects on peacebuilding efforts and that this should go beyond extractive engagement.

There are important lessons to be learned from recent and current drawdowns. We would like to highlight four.

First, we believe peacebuilding is a process, not an event, which must accompany and not simply follow peacekeeping. The goals, milestones and priorities should be aligned as much as possible.

Secondly, effective transition planning must be linked to peace operations mandates and therefore must be considered at the earliest stages of mission planning. Measurable benchmarks can play a helpful role in objectively assessing progress, although those must be jointly owned and flexibly applied.

Thirdly, missions tasked with targeted capacity-building can play an important role, but face challenges in ensuring effectiveness and sustainability of outcomes. There is much we can learn from recent experience — for example, regarding options for rapidly sourcing the necessary expertise as well as mechanisms for enabling meaningful national ownership and more sustainable outcomes.

Fourthly, transition management should proceed in partnership between the United Nations and the host Government in close consultation with bilateral, regional and international partners and development actors. The focus of such efforts has to be in-country.

Finally, we note the broader review of the peacebuilding architecture and the reviews of peace operations and resolution 1325 (2005). New Zealand strongly supports those reviews and believes that through them we can strengthen the United Nations management of peace operations and peacebuilding.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the delegation of Malaysia for organizing today's meeting on peacebuilding issues. We are grateful to the former and current Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission for their informative briefings and skilful leadership of the Commission.

Peacebuilding support is one of the key instruments the United Nations has for settling conflict effectively, stabilizing post-conflict situations and preventing relapses into armed conflict. We believe the principal responsibility for setting priorities and implementing reconstruction strategy lies with national Governments, and the relevant international efforts should focus on enhancing the institutional capacity of the affected countries, with their consent and while respecting their national sovereignty and political independence.

However, we must not limit peacebuilding to State-building and rebuilding Government institutions, because it is a complex and multifaceted process that includes, beyond its political aspects, assistance with economic development and the resolution of acute social problems. Furthermore, we consider it counterproductive, in the post-conflict context, to overemphasize gender and human rights issues that have no direct bearing on the root causes of the crisis.

Russia supports the Peacebuilding Commission's efforts to enhance the effectiveness and coordination of international support to post-conflict countries by the United Nations.

We take note of the Commission's report on its eighth session (S/2015/174). Last year was a busy one. We note the new trend of holding information sessions regularly, which, in our view, are open and informative in nature. That confirms that the Commission's unique dialogue platform has great potential for enabling intergovernmental discussion of urgent themes and cross-cutting peacebuilding issues. However, we believe that such discussion should not exceed the Commission's mandate by taking on issues that are already being considered by specialized bodies within the General Assembly structure.

We note the completion of the comprehensive review of the peacebuilding architecture, based on the modalities agreed on by Member States. We assume that the expert group has conducted an objective investigation and will submit, as soon as possible, a balanced recommendation for inter-State consideration that will help increase the effectiveness of the Commission as an intergovernmental consultative body playing a central role in the peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations, while strictly respecting the Charter-based prerogatives of the Organization.

The Commission has continued to work hard to support the countries on its agenda, including through its country-specific configurations. However, it would appear that despite producing individual examples of successful results, the Commission has not fully realized its potential. The continued fragmentation of peacebuilding support, including the financing of efforts in post-conflict reconstruction, has had negative effects in Burundi, the Central African Republic and South Sudan. In particular, the early positive trend in Burundi in addressing post-conflict issues of peacebuilding to ensure peace, security and stability has been threatened, including by the use of the financial support for electoral processes as a lever for putting pressure on the national Government. Other examples of crises include the Central African Republic and South Sudan, where there has been an unjustified and often externally imposed re-alignment of peacebuilding priorities, characterized by an irrational and excessive disbursement of already limited resources.

The outbreak of the Ebola virus was a test of the soundness of the foundation that the Peacebuilding Fund had laid for peace and security in countries such as Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. In a very short period of time it made use of its expert capacity, and the Commission was able to adapt to the needs of those States and contribute to international efforts to address that crisis. We also note the coordinated financial support by the Peacebuilding Fund to countries affected by the Ebola virus.

Mrs. Kawar (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Mr. Olof Skoog, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, its former Chair, for their briefings on peacebuilding in post-conflict situations.

Recent changes and emerging challenges, along with their impact in many areas of the world, have required that the international community and the United Nations acquire the necessary tools to deal with them. Because challenges and threats continue well after conflicts have ended, peacebuilding in the post-conflict stage is an essential aspect of peace and security operations at the national and international levels. Signed peace agreements require the presence of a solid mechanism to ensure that peace will last and to deal with repercussions in the State concerned and in the region, so as to ensure that the country does not relapse into conflict and is in a position to recover its capacity to manage its own affairs and assume its responsibilities. None of that can be done without the presence of a genuine partnership between the international community and the national authorities and communities within countries emerging from conflict. Such cases require diplomacy more than military intervention.

Since the current situation requires the review and development of peacebuilding measures in post-conflict countries, it is essential that peacebuilding operations be adapted to the needs of individual States. Furthermore, certain components must be put in place so they can be responded to appropriately.

First, the training and the support of elements from within the United Nations are needed, and capacities required to meet unconventional challenges, such as terrorism and cross-border crime, must be defined.

Secondly, the clear differences that exist among States, whether in relation to the nature of conflicts or national capacities to respond to threats, mean that we must ensure national ownership in peacebuilding, that capacity-building can happen and that the national resources exist to ensure countries' medium- and short-term development.

Thirdly, there is also the matter of building trust between the United Nations and national authorities and local communities, another important factor in ensuring peacebuilding. It could take the form of specific steps such as service-based projects to provide resources to the country.

Fourthly, complex threats emerge during and after conflicts and often cross national borders. They require a multidimensional response in which governmental, regional and subregional organizations should take part in order to strengthen and ensure peacebuilding. Despite the progress achieved in peacebuilding in a certain number of countries such as Sierra Leone and Burundi, such efforts still need to be aligned with needs and with the efforts of the United Nations itself.

The United Nations should take a leadership role in peacebuilding, particularly since that role is still not sufficiently defInted. For example, there is no clear strategy for implementing peacebuilding. We believe that the relevant context and political support to national States are both essential, which means that collective action based on clear plans is needed.

Moreover, the issue of mobilizing financial resources remains a challenge for peacebuilding. The United Nations, donors and international partners such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund must provide the necessary financial and technical support and expertise for peacebuilding, which means that certain elements must be included. Stability must be created by ensuring the rule of law, guaranteeing human rights, bringing criminals to justice and ensuringing accountability. That means building the pillars needed to enable previous international sanctions to be lifted, if the conditions exist.

Complementarity between the processes of security and development is also needed. That requires the reconstruction of institutions, with priority accorded to economic and social issues. It is also necessary to mobilize resources by involving the private sector, to ensure lasting development. Certain illegal financial flows must be ended.

Jordan accords great importance to the work being undertaken by the Peacebuilding Commission, including its advisory role for the Security Council, and its positive participation that we have witnessed in Liberia and Sierra Leone following the down-sizing there of the role of peacekeeping. We reaffirm the importance of providing support to all national, regional and international players in order to further strengthen the Peacebuilding Commission so it can meet the challenges of peacebuilding in an effective way — not after the withdrawal of peacekeeping operations, but from the very beginning of a conflict.

We support the committee that is reviewing peacebuilding and hope the result will be a strategic vision for designing response and implementation measures for security and development plans in all their aspects.

Jordan expects that the consideration by the United Nations of its commitment in the peacebuilding stage will include sending expert missions to work in post-conflict countries, with clear mandates defined by the Organization.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important meeting. I would also like to thank Ambassadors De Aguiar Patriota and Skoog for their illuminating briefings.

Since it was establishd 10 years ago, the peacebuilding architecture has made undeniable progress — on the one hand in the sense of a better understanding of the specific challenges faced by countries emerging from conflict, and on the other in improved coordination of international efforts, particularly on the part of United Nations entities. The report we are considering today (S/2015/174) specifically illustrates the way in which those efforts have made it possible to improve situations on the ground. I am thinking in particular of the partnership with the Peacebuilding Fund promoting greater inclusion of women in Liberia, or of the support provided to the establishment of the new Parliament in Guinea.

Echoing Ambassadors De Aguiar Patriota and Skoog, France would like to recognize the commitment of the peacebuilding architecture in the fight against Ebola, a crisis that gravely impacted three countries on the Commission's agenda. Forced to redirect its priorities, the Commission made every effort to raise awareness with respect to the multidimensional effort needed to combat Ebola, which had public health, social, economic,and political consequences. To have been content with a medical response alone, however crucial, would not have made it possible to adequately address the very real challenges posed by a lack of infrastructure, weak health-care systems and the population's lack of awareness of the public health challenges. We are therefore pleased to see that the peacebuilding architecture can make a difference and can help countries to emerge from crisis.

Further progress can still be made in our collective efforts. The ability to mobilize long-term resources and coordinate among a range of donors to support strategies defined by host States remains a challenge that has yet to be satisfactorily addressed. The cases of countries emerging from conflict that relapse into crisis situations reveal the shortcomings on which we still have more work to do.

With that in mind, France supports the review of the peacebuilding architecture, whose linkage to the strategic review of peacekeeping operations and the review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is vital. Those reviews allow a critical review of the totality of United Nations peacekeeping endeavours in countries in crisis or emerging from crisis, across the whole spectrum of conflicts, from prevention to post-conflict stabilization, including peacekeeping and the management of transitional phases. Institutional reconstruction, the re-establishment of functional State structures, national reconciliation, transitional justice and economic recovery are challenges that take years, sometimes even decades, to deal with. Crisis management is one thing; addressing such conflicts in the long term is another, and in that regard we have made enormous progress.

In that context, I would like to highlight several points that we consider central. First, it is essential to be firmly anchored on the ground, in specifics and in local situations, in order to provide a tailored response and to support national processes. Moreover, the real work of the Peacebuilding Commission takes place in country-specific configurations, which is where it can best be achieved. Organizational reflection is important but should always support country configurations. In that regard, France welcomes the initiative of the Central African Republic configuration, thanks to which a donor mobilization meeting was held to support that country's elections.

Secondly, it is critical that we develop our thinking and efforts with regard to sequencing and prioritizing international action. We must work on the interrelationship among the different United Nations missions and the forms of engagement, as well as on mission succession. France is grateful to Japan for its initiative on lessons learned in mission transitions.

Thirdly and lastly, we can only agree with the Peacebuilding Commission regarding the importance of the regional dimension. The States that are neighbours of post-crisis countries are key players with whom we must work closely, because crisis issues very often transcend national borders. Cooperation with regional and subregional organizations must also be enhanced, and France welcomes the high priority given to that area in the work this year.

The report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, chaired by President Ramos-Horta, was submitted a few days ago, and we are awaiting the imminent submission of the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, coordinated by Ambassador Rosenthal, and the submission in September of the report of the High-level Advisory Group for a Global Study on Resolution 1325 (2000). Those reviews are a unique opportunity to consider the whole chain linking peace, security and development in the context of the United Nations summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda. We will collectively examine the results of these strategic revieews and actively engage in the implementation of the relevant recommendations.

Mr. Méndez Graterol (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the convening of this meeting on post-conflict peacebuilding and for the presentations of Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota and Ambassador Olof Skoog.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to acknowledge the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in promoting and maintaining political attention, mobilizing resources and fostering coherence among the various agencies of the United Nations in order to improve the stability and development of the countries on its agenda. We note with appreciation the report of the Commission on its eighth session (S/2015/174). We would also like to recognize the work of the Peacebuilding Fund in allocating $99.4 million to 16 countries in 2014. We note that since the Fund was established, it has distributed more than $500 million to more than 20 countries, thereby contributing to their security and development.

Peacebuilding requires long-term international political, financial and technical support. Lack of funding and political support in areas critical to peacebuilding, with particular emphasis on the underlying causes of crises, poses a significant challenge to international efforts to prevent the relapse of countries emerging from conflicts.

The case of South Sudan reflects the consequences of a lack of sustained political, financial and technical support. According to the Secretary-General's report of September 2014 on peacekeeping in the aftermath of conflict (S/2014/694), "sustained international support was lacking".

> "Successive United Nations missions and the country team received limited support for efforts to support the development of the State's institutional capacity and improve mechanisms of governance. ... Successive attempts at disarmament, demobilization and reintegration lacked sufficient funding and political support as well as approaches better suited to the political context." (*ibid., paras 17 and 18*)

There is often a discrepancy between needs at the national level and the actions of international donors. National involvement in and ownership of peacebuilding priorities, which must be defined by the host country on the basis of political consensus, are essential. As the Secretary-General points out in the same report in relation to South Sudan, the fragmented security sector interventions from international, regional and subregional actors did not work properly because they were not grounded in a national vision for State reform.

We are aware of the need to guarantee sustained funding by the international community for peacebuilding objectives, processes and institutions throughout the continuum of post-conflict engagement. We note, for example, in the Secretary-General's 2014 report on peacebuilding, that the United Nations is expanding its partnerships and collaboration with international financial institutions, including regional development banks, to support post-conflict recovery and promote coherence and long-term financial assistance. While we welcome the initiative, we can only express a certain amount of caution on the basis of our national and regional experience. We mention in that regard that, historically, funds from international financial institutions have been accompanied by conditions disadvantageous to States and that although such funds can resolve short-term problems or financial needs, they harm long-term development.

Venezuela emphasizes that all developed countries must honour their governmental commitments in the area of official development assistance. We also reiterate the call for donors and institutions in the developed world to undertake to provide more such assistance and more unconditional debt-relief programmes. In particular, the mechanisms designed to ensure that countries receiving assistance use the funds in accordance with national development policies must be enhanced. Such assistance is essential to peacebuilding processes.

A new South-South development paradigm based on cooperation, the sovereign equality of States, complementarity and solidarity has resulted in significant progress in financing for development and could be effective in the funding of peacebuilding processes. We therefore support such cooperation, which we see as complementing North-South cooperation.

Venezuela agrees that the local capacity to mobilize peacebuilding resources must be enhanced by establishing national institutions for revenue generation and financial management. A sustainable source of resource mobilization and internal expenditure is essential for establishing State legitimacy, but, like South-South cooperation, it cannot replace North-South assistance. Developing countries, particularly those on the road to peacebuilding, need the sustained political, financial and technical support of developed countries.

In that connection, it is absolutely essential that the interests and priorities of host countries be protected in the negotiation of contracts with multinational mining companies. We therefore welcome the initiative of the Development Bank of Southern Africa to establish a fund of $22 million to assist African countries in the negotiation of contracts in the area of natural resources. That and much more is needed

My country looks forward to the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, and trusts that that process will result in substantive initiatives to address the underlying causes of conflicts, including poverty, inequality, the legacies of colonialism, foreign interference, economic dependency, illegal exploitation of natural resources, and power imbalances that affect the negotiation of contracts for the mining of such resources.

Ms. Sapag Muñoz de la Peña (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, and of course the current Chair, Ambassador Olof Skoog, for their presentations. We value their assessment of the work and progress of the Commission and the challenges facing it.

We have taken careful note of the line separating the problems that the Security Council can and must address from those that are not part of its responsibilities. In that light, we feel that the Peacebuilding Commission can play a useful role in such areas, complementing the Council's work.

Chile fully supports the work of the Peacebuilding Commission precisely because it is capable of guiding peace processes and supporting political transitions and institution-building, and not just in the immediate aftermath of conflict. The Commission can, at its full potential, function as a tool for preventing conflicts and their recurrence, thereby contributing to the work of the Security Council. The re-establishment of the rule of law and the strengthening of national institutions and the role of civil society in peacebuilding through processes intended for those purposes, funded by the Peacebuilding Fund and supported by the country configurations, make it possible to create conditions in which the root causes of conflicts can be attacked.

The Commission can also function as an early-warning tool. In practical terms, it could develop preventive diagnostics that would enable it to address the underlying causes of political, social and cultural destabilization, all of them factors that can lead to the outbreak and recurrence of conflicts. It is extremely important that the Commission be able to identify and address issues of social exclusion and economic, political and cultural problems and those related to gender and religion, as well as those stemming from intolerance and violent extremism.

In 2015 Chile became a member of the Peacebuilding Commission's Organizational Committee for the fifth time. This year we join it as a member of the Security Council, enabling us to see the interaction between the two bodies close up. In our view, it is vital that the Council and the Commission support each other, and we hope that the interactive dialogue to be held this afternoon will enable us to find opportunities for closer cooperation while avoiding duplication of tasks.

We also hope that the report on the second review process of the Commission's architecture will provide new insights that can help it to consolidate and deepen its advisory and consultative role, while recognizing the need for synergies between its review process and those related to peacekeeping operations and the Global Study on the Implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. Chile is a co-Chair of the Group of Friends of the Global Study, and we hope its recommendations will be taken up by the system.

In conclusion, and faced as we are with a complex international scenario, we urge that we continue working to coordinate the mechanisms that can enable us to follow up the issues on the Council's agenda. Our longstanding relationship with the Commission has shown us that progress can be achieved, but also the limitations the Commission faces in reaching its full potential. We believe it is a mechanism that deserves our support, and in that regard, I am pleased to report that my country hopes to continue its strong support for the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Ambassadors Patriota and Skoog for their briefings.

Establishing a peacebuilding architecture has been extremely important to the ability of the United Nations to effectively fulfil its obligations under its Charter. As the primary entity of that architecture, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has actively coordinated the international community's support to countries emerging from conflict, intensified its contributions to peacekeeping, supported the countries of West Africa in responding appropriately to the Ebola epidemic, promoted a comprehensive review of the peacebuilding architecture and generally done a great deal of productive work.

A couple of days ago the PBC successfully held its annual session, during which there were in-depth discussions on such topics as financing for peacebuilding, and significant consensus was reached. Today we are seeing traditional and non-traditional security threats intertwined, with conflicts in some countries spilling over to others in a major way, while some post-conflict countries are dealing with the risk of relapse back into conflict. Consolidating the peace that has already been achieved in such countries and attaining comprehensive economic and social development — these are the issues that the international community must reflect on in depth.

At the beginning of this year, the Security Council and General Assembly jointly launched a comprehensive review of the peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations, aimed at further improving our peacebuilding efforts and promoting the PBC's comprehensive implementation of the mandates of the Council and the Assembly. In that regard, I would like to make the following points about our peacebuilding work.

First, it is essential that we insist on ownership by the countries concerned, since that represents the foundation of peacebuilding efforts and the best way to ensure results. The international community should respect the sovereignty and ownership of the host countries, intervening only at their request and supporting them in accordance with the priorities and road maps formulated by them. It is important to focus on strengthening communication with host countries and to make timely adjustments that accord with their views.

Secondly, it is important to tailor interventions so they can adapt to changing circumstances. Post-conflict countries can find themselves in many different situations, and peacebuilding efforts should therefore come up with strategies that are country-specific, based on the circumstances and needs prevailing in individual host countries. Social reconciliation and economic and social development are key to ensuring lasting peace, and should be a natural focus for peacebuilding. While work can also be done in other areas, it should accord with host countries' needs and does not have to be all-embracing, thus avoiding the mistakes of efforts that are penny-wise and pound-foolish.

Thirdly, it is important to strengthen the PBC's coordinating role. The Commission's work covers a range of areas, including peace, security, development and society, in which there are many important participants, such as host country Governments, the various social sectors, United Nations agencies — particularly the Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council — international and regional organizations and international financial institutions. There is a need for a division of labour as well as coordination among the various participants. It is to be hoped that the PBC will strengthen its coordination among the parties in the field of peacebuilding so that they can play to their respective strengths, in accordance with their mandates, and form synergies.

Fourthly, it is important to ensure that the Commission's advisory function is fully realized. The PBC has a great amount of information at its disposal, as well as a deep understanding of such subjects as how to consolidate peace and strengthen host countries' capacities and institution-building. The Commission should therefore continue to strengthen its relations with the Council and provide it with active advice. The Council, for its part, should also improve its coordination with the Commission and its various country configurations so as to arrive at the kind of comprehensive understanding that will enable it to provide guidance on its peacebuilding efforts.

Mr. Mangaral (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would like to congratulate the Malaysian presidency on its organization of today's meeting on peacebuilding and to thank Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, the former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and Mr. Olof Skoog, the current Chair, for their statements.

Chad takes note of the Commission's report on its work during 2014 (S/2015/174), welcomes its activities and encourages it to continue to carry out its vital functions. In that regard I have the following comments to make.

Regarding the issue of financial resources, the Commission should put greater emphasis on enhancing public income and combating illicit financing flows so as to promote the direct participation of the countries concerned in peacebuilding efforts. In Liberia, for instance, where the lack of financial resources and insufficient national revenue base have continued to hinder progress in the areas of the rule of law and security sector reform, the Commission could work harder to mobilize more significant support for managing the country's natural resources. We should establish global policies aimed at limiting and mitigating the effects that the illicit flight of capital can have on countries and at supporting capacity-building in public finances and the creation of national revenue. Ongoing support in that area would allow those countries to generate a more significant part of the financial resources necessary for re-establishing economic infrastructure and providing basic services. We note the areas in which new policies could be designed to help countries emerging from conflict, including the capacity to negotiate contracts related to national resources; the transparency and responsibility of mining companies, and the tax regimes to be applied; the establishment of international mechanisms to strengthen mutual responsibility and international cooperation on tax issues, against tax evasion and trade distortion; and the fight against banking secrecy laws, which promote the illicit movement of funds.

In terms of the national ownership of initiatives, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) must focus the international community's attention on the priorities of the countries concerned. In that way, it could support the implementation of the Government projects in Guinea-Bissau aimed at establishing a national peacebuilding strategy and continue to promote the coordination and harmonization of the support given to the country's priority goals. The Commission could do the same in Guinea, since the Government has made its priorities known with regard to peacebuilding and human rights. In Burundi, the Commission could focus on the continued enhancement of social cohesion and the speedy implementation of the development programme established by the Government. Finally, in Sierra Leone, the Peacebuilding Commission could continue to work to promote the country's efforts to ensure durable peace.

I wish to highlight the importance of regional perspectives in the context of the work of the Commission, because the role and functions of the United Nations and regional actors are complementary in nature. In that regard, countries that are neighbours of those on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda, the African Union and other organizations must be major partners in political processes and the combat against factors that promote instability. It is therefore vital that the Commission enhance its cooperation and establish closer ties with those countries and the African Union. For example, the Central African Republic continues to enjoy the region's support for the peaceful settlement of the crisis.

At the bilateral level, and in the context of a subregional effort, Chad, along with other countries members of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa, contributed on several occasions to the payment of civil servants' salaries in the Central African Republic. The Commission could enhance its support for regional initiatives promoting an ongoing political dialogue that is open to all countries emerging from conflict, and cooperate in such efforts. We pay tribute to the efforts of the African Union to deal with the problems caused by financial flows, and we support the adoption of a regional approach to deal with that challenge. Chad also reasserts its support for the African Union's common position on the comprehensive review of the peacebuilding architecture in 2015. We encourage the review to strengthen the contribution made by the United Nations peacebuilding architecture to the African Union's peace and development objectives and to make recommendations in that regard.

Concerning the Peacebuilding Commission's advisory role for the Security Council, we encourage the Commission to continue to look at ways of enhancing that role and improving its relations with the Council, particularly with regard to the issues of United Nations missions in transition and repeated relapse into conflict. We believe the Commission's advisory role should be seen in a strategic light and should enhance the political strategy of the Council and the United Nations in given situations. We also believe that the dialogue between these two entities should be based on flexibility and the absence of any formalities, with the participation of ambassadors and Council country experts, as well as the active follow-up of Council deliberations by the PBC. We favour making informal contacts with individual countries before the Council takes any steps, particularly when reviewing mandates.

The Peacebuilding Commission should insist on the participation of women in peacebuilding and encourage the adoption of measures relating to their economic empowerment. We look forward to the recommendations of the comprehensive high-level review on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), which will allow us to assess the progress made in enhancing the role of women in post-conflict peacebuilding and any obstacles that may remain.

In conclusion, given the negative impact of the Ebola pandemic in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in 2014, we call on the Commission to enhance its capacity to mobilize resources and invite the countries concerned to generate resources at the national level. The Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund were created in 2005 with the promise that assistance would be given to countries to prevent them from falling back into violence. We therefore look forward to a review of the progress achieved since 2005, the difficulties encountered in managing post-conflict problems and the recommendations drawn from the review, which should enable the three entities to do a better job. We believe those recommendations should aim at helping to prevent countries emerging from conflict from relapsing into violence, since recent examples of the resurgence of violence, as in the Central African Republic and South Sudan, have made clear the gaps that exist in terms of assistance to peacebuilding.

Mrs. Jakubonė (Lithuania): I thank Ambassador Skoog of Sweden and Ambassador De Aguiar Patriota of Brazil for their comprehensive briefings and personal commitment to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).

Lithuania recognizes the critical importance of peacebuilding as the foundation for sustainable peace and development in the aftermath of conflict and highly values the contribution of the PBC, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office in support of post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding in the countries on the PBC agenda. Over the past year, the PBC has further demonstrated its potential in identifying gaps to peacebuilding and ensuring that countries at risk of sliding back into conflict remain on the international community's agenda. The PBC was especially instrumental at the beginning of the Ebola outbreak. The Commission has actively utilized its role as an advocate and in resource mobilization, and has helped to draw the international community's attention to and focus on the risks posed by the Ebola outbreak to the three most affected countries. Its advisory, advocacy and resource mobilization capacity should be further utilized.

Sustained and predictable funding for areas critical to peacebuilding and consolidation is crucial to international efforts to prevent a relapse into violence. Investments in support of political dialogue and the strengthening of security and rule-of-law institutions are essential, both during violent conflict and in its aftermath. Institutional capacity-building is a long-term endeavour and requires targeted and sustained support. We welcome the PBC discussions in that regard on ways to enhance the predictability of peacebuilding funding.

National as well as regional leadership and ownership are crucial to sustainable peacebuilding. We commend the Commission's active engagement with African countries and Africa's regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union. It should further promote established partnerships and enhance synergy, since that contributes to forging greater regional coherence in the post-conflict response.

The PBC should remain actively engaged in support of the political dialogue and other preparatory processes during the electoral periods in the countries on the PBC agenda. We welcome the active engagement of the PBC Burundi configuration in that regard. As the country is experiencing a severe pre-electoral crisis, it is very important that the PBC configuration remain vigilant over the developments in the country.

It is important to further promote the gender dimension of peacebuilding, and we commend the Commission's continuing work in that regard. Women and young people can and should play a very active role both in conflict resolution and in peacebuilding efforts. Women should be in a position to envisage the path to empowerment with full-scale participation in post-conflict social, economic, political and security structures.

We support the advisory role of the PBC and encourage exploring further ways of making better use of the mutually beneficial links between the PBC and the Security Council. The interaction between the two bodies should remain mutually proactive. The PBC should continue to draw the attention of Council members, formally and informally, to emerging threats in the countries on its agenda in order to reduce the risk of emergence or relapse into violent conflict.

Peacebuilding is a long and delicate process involving many actors and different stakeholders. We trust that the ongoing peacebuilding review will draw on past experiences and lessons learned and generate concrete recommendations on how to strengthen the international community's response to the post-conflict situation and build sustainable peace.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): We welcome Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and thank him for presenting the Commission's report (S/2015/174). We praise the work that Brazil has been doing for some time as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration and all of the efforts that have been made to ensure a meaningful process of peace consolidation in that brother country. We also welcome and thank Ambassador Olof Skoog, the Commission's current Chair.

The Peacebuilding Commission has scored undeniable successes in countries on its agenda. However, we recognize that much remains to be done and that further efforts will be needed to maintain post-conflict gains in some of those countries.

The issue under consideration in today's meeting is critical to ensuring lasting and sustainable peace in countries emerging from conflict. Last year, the United Nations peacebuilding framework deployed substantial resources in support of countries to help them move towards peace consolidation and to strengthen the nexus between security and development. The Peacebuilding Commission pursues its activities based on advocacy, mobilizing resources, strengthening partnerships, forging coherence in policy development and ensuring national ownership of the peacebuilding processes. Additionally, the Commission must strengthen its advisory function with regard to the Security Council and the General Assembly and make its actions more coordinated and incisive.

The Peacebuilding Commission plays a mediating role between the United Nations and the international community by helping countries in post-conflict situations build their national institutions, strengthen social cohesion and carry out structural, social and economic reforms. The Commission also plays a crucial role in helping them to overcome outstanding challenges. In that regard, we mention the Commission's outstanding intervention in assisting Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, the three West African countries most affected by the Ebola outbreak.

With regard to mobilizing resources, the Commission plays a crucial role in assisting in the consolidation of peace and stability. In the case of Guinea-Bissau, for example, it is helping the Government to implement its priority agenda. It also contributed to holding a donor conference for Guinea-Bissau, which took place in March in Brussels with remarkable success. That conference was an example of how the Peacebuilding Commission can strengthen partnerships by playing a key role in bringing together the international community, regional organizations, financial institutions and Member States to address the needs and concerns of the countries on its agenda.

We welcome the Commission's efforts to involve women in peacebuilding processes and to empower and include them in all peacebuilding efforts. Overlooking the contribution of women and the crucial role they can play in peacebuilding and social and economic development is a mistake and a recipe for failure.

Women, youth and civil society organizations are powerful driving forces in peace consolidation processes and in social development in general. The review of resolution 1325 (2000) is an opportunity to take stock of that reality.

As has already been said, the Peacebuilding Commission must strengthen its advisory role with regard to the Security Council and the General Assembly on issues pertaining to post-conflict countries. For instance, in countries with ongoing demobilization, disarmament, reintegration (DDR) and security-sector reform programmes, the Commission must provide pertinent information to the Security Council on the implementation and follow-up of such programmes in order to ensure that ex-combatants are not excluded and to create the best possible conditions for their better integration into civilian life, which is a crucial element in the peace consolidation process.

In countries where the Security Council intends to terminate, draw down or reduce the personnel of a peacekeeping mission, the Peacebuilding Commission must draw the attention of the United Nations and the Security Council to the appropriateness of such moves. The peacekeeping operations review takes into account that fundamental element in strengthening the advisory role of the Commission.

We would like to share Angola's experience as a post-conflict country and to offer some views on aspects that we consider essential to a successful peacebuilding process.

In political terms, in taking into account the principal of national ownership, peacebuilding demands trust and good faith on the part of the main stakeholders and requires that they work to achieve genuine national reconciliation. In Angola, the peace and reconstruction process required, first, the extension of the State's authority to the whole country, institution-building, respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Social and political inclusion is a fundamental feature of any peacebuilding process. The efforts deployed by the Angolan authorities to reach out to former adversaries and integrate them into society are well documented, as is the restoration of State institutions and economic life in general. That was a determining factor in the success of our peace, national reconciliation and reconstruction process. Furthermore, the full participation of political actors, women, young people, civil society and the media in the national debate led to the adoption of constitutional and legal mechanisms associated with peacebuilding.

In social and economic terms, peacebuilding required the reconstruction of all the infrastructure destroyed by the war and especially the restoration of basic services to the population — roads, bridges, railroads, airports, ports, schools and hospitals. The success of the disarmament, demobilization and social reintegration of more than 100,000 members of the military was pivotal to the consolidation of peace, which laid the foundations for sound social and economic recovery. A lot still remains to be done in social and economic development, social democratization and inclusion, but we can say that in general the country is on the right track.

We fully support the review of the peacebuilding architecture, adapting peacebuilding to the dynamics of the situation in each post-conflict country and working more closely with the Security Council, the General Assembly, the United Nations system and regional and subregional organizations in preventing relapses into conflict and working in coordination with regional organizations to consolidate peace and stability. The review of the peacebuilding architecture offers a unique opportunity for a clearer definition of the partnership to be established with the African Union and the African subregional organizations. However, the debate that has been going on for quite some time in the African Union has not yielded tangible results, a shortcoming that we hope the present review will address. In addition, we expect that this year's review of peacekeeping operations will afford a better understanding of the related challenges and insufficiencies and lead to the formulation of recommendations for rendering the cooperation between the peacebuilding architecture and the peacebuilding operations more effective.

Finally, we are of the view that the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and regional organizations should establish a more complementary and tangible partnership in securing peace and security in the world by strengthening the nexus between security and development.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): I would like to thank Ambassadors Patriota and Skoog for their briefings earlier. I also thank Ambassador Patriota for his work as the outgoing Chair of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), especially during the outbreak of the Ebola virus in the three countries on the PBC's agenda. I congratulate Ambassador Skoog, who is doing important work as the 2015 Chair of the Organizational Committee, and the chairs of the country-specific configurations. We are grateful for their efforts to rally support from the international community to assist many of the world's most fragile States in recovering from conflict.

It is clear from the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (S/2015/174) that we have made some progress in preventing conflict and building conditions for lasting peace in some places. The Commission has played a critical role in assisting Guinea-Bissau, helping focus donor engagement and building domestic capacity in the security and health sectors. In Liberia, the Commission's engagement, specifically in the justice and rule of law sectors, has helped build capacity ahead of a planned drawdown of the United Nations Mission in Liberia.

It is also clear that gaps still exist between our collective aspirations for helping fragile States to solidify peace and the realities in practice and on the ground. The purpose for which the peacebuilding architecture was created in 2005 — preventing relapse into violent conflict — remains easy to talk about but hard to do. And it is a challenge for all of us. In places like Burundi and the Central African Republic we are keenly aware of how important it is that the international community sustain and increase our joint efforts.

The PBC has an important role in complementing the work of the Security Council in post-conflict countries on the Commission's agenda — engaging international financial institutions, raising the profile of needs that are not being met and bringing to the attention of Member States issues that could put peace at risk. It is an art, not a science, and each case has unique challenges and unique solutions. There is no single prescription for how to ensure that peace is sustained, but there are key factors that should be of concern to the Peacebuilding Commission.

In the aftermath of the tragic outbreak of Ebola in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea — all countries on the Commission's agenda — the PBC played a critical supportive role in bringing together all the relevant actors to fight the disease, working in concert with the efforts of the Security Council, the relevant United Nations agencies, the United Nations Secretariat and international partners. Weak national capacity in the aftermath of conflict can have devastating consequences, as the outbreak of the Ebola virus demonstrated, and the Peacebuilding Commission must apply itself urgently to bringing together the technical and financial resources required to build post-conflict countries' capacity to meet the needs of their people.

The Peacebuilding Commission has played an important role in refocusing the international community on the immense challenges that remain in the Central African Republic. We are optimistic that the Bangui Forum helped advance that country on its path towards peace. Yet as the Commission has highlighted, the Central African Republic's road ahead will remain difficult, and it requires sustained and significant support from international partners.

We echo the Commission's call to all stakeholders in the Central African Republic to help promote an environment conducive to holding elections, and we echo its concerns about the $21 million gap in the funding for the election's budget. We urge all partners to consider making additional contributions to support elections in the Central African Republic, advance demobilization, disarmament and reintegration efforts and address other urgent priorities essential to that country's stabilization. The Commission continues to play an important leadership and convening role as the Central African Republic advances towards stability, and it must work to ensure that we remain focused on the tasks at hand.

We appreciate the Peacebuilding Commission's special emphasis on engaging regional actors in fragile settings, particularly the neighbours of those countries on the Commission's agenda. The Commission has played a welcome role in encouraging Senegal's engagement in Guinea-Bissau, as well as in promoting a dialogue in the dispute between the two countries over the Casamance region. The Commission has also engaged the members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in their planning for long-term stability in Guinea-Bissau, recognizing the essential role of the ECOWAS security mission in Guinea-Bissau in helping to provide stability on the ground. That is critical work, and it should continue.

The Commission must ensure that women are integrated into every step of post-conflict peacebuilding. They must be empowered to make and invest in choices about the future of their societies. Working with the Government of Liberia, the Peacebuilding Commission has ensured the greater involvement of civil society, including women's groups, in the national reconciliation process, in addition to promoting an increased allocation of funds for gender issues from the Peacebuilding Fund. As a result of the Commission's engagement, Liberia is one of the countries where the allocation of the fund for gender-related issues is higher than the 15 per cent target set by the Secretary-General in his report on women's participation in peacebuilding (S/2010/466).

While we recognize that the Peacebuilding Commission has had some successes over the past year in meeting some of those challenges, it is also critical that we understand the challenges facing it and its work, including those outlined in the recently released report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. As documented in that report, the Peacebuilding Commission has not met expectations that its focus would include, importantly, prevention.

By comparison with those provided once a conflict is under way, prevention efforts often lack the necessary attention and resources. Moreover, in contrast to mediation and peacekeeping, the prevention of armed conflict is approached in an ad hoc manner, without cohesion among the actors — diplomatic, political, development or economic. As the Panel's report clearly states, "Put simply, the international community is failing at preventing conflict". Failing to prevent a relapse into crisis is costly, both in terms of human lives and in the time and resources needed after a country has relapsed. It is a failure we cannot afford not to address. The peacebuilding architecture must play a critical role in that effort. In that vein, we welcome the five-year review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture currently under way as a tool for addressing some of those challenges.

The year 2015 is a significant one for United Nations peacebuilding as the international community focuses on the need to pay close attention to the key components of lasting peace after conflict — national ownership, social and political inclusivity, institution-building and predictable financing. We look forward to working with the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office, as well as other United Nations and international actors, on how to best respond to the needs of countries emerging from conflict and to solidify the gains made in countries as they transition to a lasting peace.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Malaysia.

I join the other Council members in thanking Ambassador Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) at its ninth session, for his statement. I am delighted to see Sweden at the helm of the PBC and am confident that under Ambassador Skoog's leadership we will achieve further progress in the Commission's work. I would also like to thank Ambassador Patriota of Brazil for his outstanding leadership of the PBC at its eighth session. His statement and report (S/2015/174) outline many important issues that will continue to dominate our discussions. My appreciation goes to the Peacebuilding Support Office for its unstinting support for and cooperation with the PBC.

The challenges facing international peace and security today are enormously demanding in terms of political attention and the need for resources. Since its establishment, the PBC has demonstrated its contribution particularly in terms of its support for institution-building and strengthening national resilience in times of peace, as well as in providing advice and accompaniment to countries dealing with political difficulties in troubled times.

As a member of both the Security Council and the PBC concurrently, Malaysia has assumed an informal coordinating role between both bodies in order to facilitate better mutual understanding and relations. Today's discussion underscores the need for strengthening strategic partnerships in both bodies in order to deal with, other things, issues such as transitions and the emerging gaps between peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and the engagement of international or regional actors in preventing countries emerging from conflict from relapsing into it.

At the same time, the review of the peacebuilding architecture now under way presents a timely opportunity for the members of the Commission and the wider United Nations membership to take stock and deliberate further on measures aimed at improving the Organization's peacebuilding architecture. We believe that the review of the peacebuilding architecture and its outcome should also take into consideration other review processes, namely, the high-level review of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, and the outcome of the United Nations peace operations review. Malaysia believes that the outcome of those three processes is highly important to the United Nations system. The reviews must be mutually reinforcing if they are to have the desired impact.

We have followed closely the views of Council members on the need for a sharper focus in peacebuilding efforts and in the expertise and financial support required. We look forward to the informal interactive dialogue on that subject later today.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.